THE BODY

(Stand By Me)

Screenplay

by

RAYNOLD GIDEON & BRUCE A. EVANS

Based on a short story

by

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FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN. The title "THE BODY" DISSOLVES UP IN WHITE LETTERS.

FADE OUT TITLE.

FADE IN:

1 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATE AFTERNOON 1

A hard autumn RAIN POUNDS a Morris Minor parked on the shoulder. THROUGH the water-streaked WINDOWS, we see a blurred image of GORDON LACHANCE, 37, slumped down in the seat staring straight ahead.

2 INT. MORRIS MINOR - LATE AFTERNOON 2

Lying on the dash is a crumpled copy of The Oregonian folded open to a story whose headline reads "Local Attorney Fatally Stabbed in Restaurant." Outside, a yellow school bus drops off a young boy.

Gordon watches as the bus drives off and the young boy, 12, yanks his jacket up over his head and runs up the hill toward his house. THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD we MOVE IN ON Gordon's face.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
(the adult voice of Gordon Lachance)
In all of our lives there's a fall from innocence. A time after which we are never the same.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

3 EXT. CASTLE ROCK (A BLUE-COLLAR MILL TOWN) - MORNING 3

It's 7:30 and already hot. "BIRDDOG" by The Everly Brothers BLEEDS IN ON THE SOUNDTRACK. The twelve-year-old GORDON LACHANCE, dark hair, sweet face, walks across the shady common. Temporary platforms have been erected and a banner over them advertises the Castle Rock "Labor Day" picnic.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
I was twelve going on thirteen when I first saw a dead human being.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 3

Gordie kicks a can down a tired-looking street.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
(continuing)
It happened in 1960, a long time ago... although sometimes it doesn't seem that long to me.

Gordie enters a vacant lot where a treehouse made of scavenged planks swelters in the lower branches of an ancient elm.

4 INT. TREEHOUSE - MORNING 4

CHRIS CHAMBERS (12), good looking, dirty blond, all American, with a fading black eye, sits across a ratty card table from Gordie. Between them, TEDDY DUCHAMP (12), coke-bottle glasses and hair much longer than either of them, draws a card from a stack and discards one in his hand.

CHRIS
How do you know a Frenchman's been in your back yard?

TEDDY
Hey, I'm French, okay?

CHRIS
Your garbage cans are empty and your dog is pregnant.

TEDDY
Didn't I just say I was French?

CHRIS
I knock.

Gordie draws and gets nothing helpful. Teddy draws.

CHRIS
(continuing; laying down diamonds)
Twenty-nine.

TEDDY
(thinking he's lost)
Twenty-two.

GORDIE
(slams his cards on the table)
Piss up a rope.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: 4

TEDDY
(bugles)
Gordie's out. Ole' Gordie just bit the bag and stepped out the door. Eee-eee-eee...

His laugh sounds like a rusty nail being hauled out of a rotten board. Teddy scratches the back of his head and we get a glimpse of a flesh-colored hearing aid stuck into an ear that looks like a lump of warm wax.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
(as Teddy deals)
Teddy was the craziest guy we hung around with. His favorite sport was what he called "truck dodging." He'd run out in front of the big rigs on 196 and let them miss him by bare inches.

Gordie leaves the table and picks up a "Master Detective" to read. Chris draws and discards.

TEDDY
I knock.

CHRIS
You four-eyed pile of shit!

TEDDY
(gravely)
The pile of shit has a thousand eyes.

Gordie and Chris look at each other and crack up.

TEDDY
(continuing; looks at them quizzically)
What?... What's so funny?... Come on, I got thirty. What have you got?

CHRIS
(laughing)
Sixteen.

TEDDY
Go ahead. Keep laughing. You're down to your ride, pal. Come on. Let's go.

Still grinning, Chris starts to shuffle.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (2) 4

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Chris was the leader of our gang, and my best friend. He came from a bad family and everybody thought he would turn out bad... including Chris.

We hear SOMEONE COMING FAST UP THE LADDER nailed to the side of the elm. Chris stops dealing. A FIST RAPS on the underside of the trapdoor.

CHRIS
Who goes?

VOICE
(excited and out of breath)
Vern.

Gordie pulls the bolt. The TRAPDOOR BANGS UP and VERN TESSIO, another twelve-year-old, raises himself into the clubhouse. He's sweating buckets and his hair, which he usually keeps combed in a perfect imitation of his rock and roll idol, Bobby Rydell, is plastered to his bullet head in chunks and strings.

VERN
(panting)
Wow, man! Wait'll you hear this.

Chris and Teddy continue to play cards.

GORDIE
Hear what?

VERN
(breathing heavily)
Lemme get my breath. I ran all the way from my house.

TEDDY
(Little Anthony falsetto)
I ran all the way home...

CHRIS & GORDIE
(raggedly begin to harmonize with him)
... just to say I'm soh-ree...

TEDDY
What can I say...

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (3) 4

CHRIS & GORDIE
I ran all the way... yay, yay, yay...

VERN
(trying to override them)
Come on, you guys... Listen to me... This is boss. Come on...

Teddy, Chris, and Gordie continue to sing.

VERN
(continuing)
Okay. Okay. Forget it. I don't have to tell you nuthin'...

CHRIS
Alright, Vern, what is it?

VERN
Okay, great. You won't believe this. Sincerely. I...

TEDDY, CHRIS & GORDIE
(interrupting, singing again)
I ran all the way home...

VERN
Screw you guys.

CHRIS
No, no, no. What is it?

VERN
Can you guys camp out tonight? I mean if you tell your folks we're gonna tent out in my back field?

CHRIS
(begins to deal again)
Yeah, I guess so. But my dad's on a mean streak.
(taps his black eye)
Drinkin', you know.

VERN
You got to, man. Sincerely. You won't believe this. Can you, Gordie?

GORDIE
Yeah, probably.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (4) 4

TEDDY
So what are you pissing and moaning about, Vern-O?

CHRIS
I knock.

TEDDY
What?!! You liar! You ain't got no pat hand! You didn't deal yourself no pat hand!!

CHRIS
(smirks)
Make your draw, shitheap.

Teddy reaches for the top card on the pile of bikes. Chris reaches for his smoke on the ledge behind him. Gordie bends over to pick up his detective magazine.

VERN
You guys want to go see a dead body?

Everybody stops and looks at Vern.

VERN
(continuing)
I was under the porch digging, you know.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
We all understood what Vern meant right away.

DISSOLVE TO:

5 EXT. TESSIO HOUSE - EARLIER THAT MORNING 5

The front porch runs the length of the house -- probably forty feet long and seven feet wide. As the Narrator talks, we MOVE TOWARD a small door in the lattice-work skirt that fences the underside of the porch.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
When Vern was eight he buried a quart jar of pennies under his porch. He drew a treasure map so he could find them again. A week later his mom cleaned out his room and threw away his map.

OUR VIEW ARRIVES at the small doorway and we...

CUT TO:

6 UNDER THE PORCH 6

The ground looks like a prairie dog city with its little holes and mounds of earth. Halfway toward the other end the twelve-year-old Vern is digging obsessively with a short handle hoe.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Vern had been trying to find those pennies for four years. Four years, man. You didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

The SCREEN DOOR SLAMS open above him and Vern freezes in midstroke. TWO PAIRS OF FOOTSTEPS cross the porch. Carefully Vern moves his eyeballs to look through a crack in the boards. It's his brother BILLY and his juvenile delinquent friend, CHARLIE HOGAN -- both sixteen.

CHARLIE
(in a trembling, cry-baby voice)
Jesus Christ, Billy, we gotta do something.

BILLY
Why? Who says?

INTERCUT under porch and exterior porch.

CHARLIE
But we saw him.

BILLY
So? It's nuthin' to us. The kid's dead so it's nuthin' to him, neither. Who gives a shit if they ever find him? I don't. And the girls didn't see him.

CHARLIE
But it was that kid they been talking about on the radio.

Vern's head snaps around and he tries to get a look at them through the lattice work.

CHARLIE
(continuing)
Brocker, Brower, Flowers, whatever his name is. Train must have hit him.

BILLY
So?

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: 6

NARRATOR (V.O.)
We had all followed the Ray Brower story closely because he was a kid our age. Three days before he'd gone out to pick blueberries and nobody'd seen him since.

Billy lights a cigarette and flicks the match into the gravel driveway. Vern doesn't want to miss any of this and begins to creep a little closer to the steps.

CHARLIE
I think we should tell the cops.

BILLY
You don't go squawking to the cops after you boosted a car. They'd want to know how we got way the hell out on the Back Harlow Road. They know we ain't got no car. It's better if we just keep our mouths shut. Then they can't touch us.

CHARLIE
We could make a nonnamus call.

BILLY
They trace those calls, stupid. I seen it on Highway Patrol and Dragnet.

CHARLIE
Yeah, right. I wish we'd never boosted that goddamned Dodge. If Ace'd been with us, we could have told the cops we was in his car.

BILLY
(tosses cigarette butt away)
Well, he wasn't.

CHARLIE
We gonna tell him?

BILLY
We ain't gonna tell nobody. Nobody never. You dig me?

CHARLIE
Christ Jesus, I wish we never boosted that goddamned Dodge.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (2) 6

BILLY
Aw, shut up and come on.

Two pairs of legs clad in tight, wash-faded jeans, two pairs of feet in black engineer boots with side buckles, come down the steps and keep going.

7 INT. TREEHOUSE - MORNING 7

The boys' positions around Vern have changed. They're all sitting facing him now.

TEDDY
I know the Back Harlow Road. It comes to a dead end by the Royal River. The train tracks are right there. Me and my dad used to fish for cossies out there.

CHRIS
If they'd known you were under there, they would have killed you.

Everybody nods in agreement. Then the idea begins to take hold.

GORDIE
(musing)
Could he have gotten all the way from Chamerlain to Harlow? That's twenty or thirty miles.

CHRIS
I think so. He musta started walking on the train tracks and followed them the whole way.

TEDDY
Yeah. And after dark a train must have come along and...
(drives his right fist into his left palm)
... el smacko.

CHRIS
Yeah. I bet you anything if we find him we'll get our pictures in the paper.

VERN
(shocked)
Huh?!

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: 7

TEDDY
Yeah! We could even be on TV.

CHRIS
Sure. If we can find the body and report it, we'll be on the news.

TEDDY
We'll be heroes.

VERN
I dunno. Billy will know where I found out.

GORDIE
He won't care. Because it'll be us guys that find that kid, not Billy and Charlie Hogan in a boosted car. They'll probably pin a medal on you.

VERN
Yeah? Yeah, you think so?!

GORDIE
Sure.

VERN
But what will we tell our folks?

GORDIE
Just what you said. We all tell our folks we're tenting in your back yard, and you tell your folks you're sleeping over at Teddy's. And that the next morning we're all going over to hang out at the drag races. We're rock solid 'til dinner tomorrow night.

VERN
But if we find that kid's body over in South Harlow, they'll know we didn't go to the drag races. We'll get hided.

GORDIE
No, we won't. Everybody'll be so excited about what we found.

CHRIS
Yeah.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (2) 7

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(thinks about it)
My dad'll hide me, anyway. Hell, it's worth a hiding. Let's do it. What do you say, Gordie?

GORDIE
Sure.

CHRIS
Vern?

VERN
I don't know.

BOYS
Vern... Vern-O... Come on, it'll be great.

VERN
Yeah, okay.

TEDDY
(shoots his fist in the air)
Too cool!

8 EXT. LACHANCE HOUSE - DAY 8

We PUSH IN on an upstairs window and see Gordie moving back and forth in the room.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Our plans were set and we all went about the business of preparing for the trip.

CUT TO:

9 INT. GORDIE'S ROOM - MIDDAY 9

With a hot dog wrapped in Wonder Bread stuck in his mouth, Gordie is getting ready for his trip. He pulls two blankets out of a drawer and throws them on the bed. With his hands free he tries to take another bite off the hot dog only to have it squirt out onto the floor.

Casually, he picks it up, blows the lint off, and sticks it back in his mouth. He straightens a sheaf of handwritten pages, the title of which is "The Secret of the Living Dead" by Gordon Lachance.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: 9

He hears FOOTSTEPS coming down the hall and hides the pages under a stack of comic books.

Gordie's FATHER, a tall, stooped man with a tired face and gray hair, walking aimlessly down the hall, glances into Gordie's room. There's an awkward pause.

GORDIE
(trying to make contact)
You want a Rollo, Dad?

FATHER
No...

The Father continues down the hall. After a beat, Gordie collects all the loose change and a watch off the top of the dresser and puts them in his pocket.

CUT TO:

10 INT. TEDDY'S ROOM - MIDDAY 10

There's an Army recruiting poster above his bed. Child-like crayon drawings of battle scenes decorate another wall. There's a faded 8X10 of his father as a young man in combat gear propped up on the dresser. Cheap plastic models of planes, tanks and ships litter the room. Teddy takes a set of dog tags off his father's picture and pulls them over his head. Humming the Marine hymn Teddy puts on a cut-down battle blouse and tucks it into a pair of fatigue pants.

TEDDY
(looking at himself in the mirror)
Too cool.

He turns around and searches the floor for a helmet liner. When he finds it he scoops it up and returns to the mirror to put it on. He picks up a web belt with a canteen hooked onto it and buckles it around his waist.

TEDDY
(continuing)
Ahh... Too cool!

He increases the volume of the Marine hymn as he goes to the closet and drags out a full-length greatcoat. He comes back to the mirror and struggles into it.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: 10

TEDDY
(continuing)
Too cool...
(after a pause; feeling the weight of the jacket)
Too hot.

He starts to take it off.

CUT TO:

11 INT. CHRIS' ROOM - MIDDAY 11

While his FATHER, unshaven, 40's, snores bare-assed on a filthy bed surrounded by empty wine bottles, Chris is very carefully pulling Winstons out of a pack on the dresser.

CUT TO:

12 INT. KITCHEN - VERN'S HOUSE - MIDDAY 12

Vern is sitting alone at the kitchen table shoveling Spaghetti-O's into his mouth. Anxious to leave, he gets up from the table.

VERN
'Bye, Ma, see you tomorrow.

MOTHER (O.S.)
Vern! You're not going anywhere until you finish everything on that plate.

Vern, with half a plate still in front of him, is momentarily stumped. He sees the open kitchen window. He picks up the plate and, with a flick of the wrist, launches the remainder of the Spaghetti-O's out the window.

VERN
(setting down the now-empty plate)
All finished, Ma.

MOTHER (O.S.)
(as Vern heads out)
Okay, have a good time.

13 EXT. GORDIE'S HOUSE - MIDDAY 13

Gordie's father is watering the sunburned remains of a garden. His MOTHER, a haggard, gray-haired woman, is hanging laundry on a line. Gordie sticks his head out of the second-story window above them.

GORDIE
Mom, do you know where my canteen is?

His mother, lost in herself, continues with the laundry.

GORDIE
(continuing)
Mom...

Still no response.

FATHER
(after a look at his wife)
It's in Denny's room.

GORDIE
(a pause)
Oh...

For a moment longer, he watches his parents go through their separate rituals.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
In April my older brother Dennis had been killed in a jeep accident during basic training. Four months has passed and my parents still hadn't been able to put the pieces back together again.

14 INT. DENNY'S ROOM - MIDDAY 14

Gordie is standing in the doorway. There are Ivy League college pennants on the walls, trophies on a shelf, and senior pictures of Denny and the girls he dated stuck into the mirror. Trues and Sports Illustrateds are stacked neatly on the desk. The bed is freshly made and there's a letterman's jacket hanging off the back of a chair. It feels eerie and Gordie is both wistful and uneasy as he crosses to the closet. There's a slight hesitation before he opens the door. He takes the canteen off the shelf, turns to leave the room, and stops. He looks at the canteen.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: 14

DENNY (V.O.)
You're gonna be my good luck charm, Gordie.

CUT TO:

15 FLASHBACK: INT. DENNY'S ROOM - DAY 15

It's now lived in. Gordie is ten. DENNY is seventeen. They're sitting on the bed together. Denny is going through a tackle box.

DENNY
We're not gonna leave one trout in that pond, are we, buddy?

GORDIE
No way, Den...

FATHER (V.O.)
You found it.

CUT BACK TO:

16 PRESENT 16

With a start, Gordie looks up. His father is standing in the doorway watching him.

GORDIE
Huh?!

FATHER
You found it.

GORDIE
Oh... yeah.

His father waits by the door until Gordie leaves the room, then closes the door.

17 INT. HALLWAY - MIDDAY 17

Gordie walks along the corridor toward his room. Just as he is about to enter it:

FATHER
Why can't you have friends like Denny's?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: 17

GORDIE
(stops)
Oh, Dad, they're okay.

FATHER
Sure they are. A thief and two feebs.

GORDIE
Chris isn't a thief.

FATHER
He stole the milk money at school last year. He's a thief in my book.

His father turns and starts down the stairs. After a last look at his Father, Gordie enters his room.

CUT TO:

18 EXT. CASTLE ROCK STREET - MIDDAY 18

Gordie, the canteen slapping against his hip and the bedroll slung across his back, is walking along. Roy Orbison's "ONLY THE LONELY" BUILDS ON THE SOUNDTRACK.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Finally, we were all ready to go see the body of a dead kid named Ray Brower.

A dark car swerves to the curb and drops off Chris. Chris has an old Boy Scout pack in one hand. A blanket sticks out of the pack.

CHRIS
Thanks, mister.

The car pulls away.

CHRIS
(continuing)
Hey, Gordo...

GORDIE
(a little distant)
Hey, man...

CHRIS
(trots over to Gordie)
You wanna see something?

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: 18

GORDIE
(unenthusiastic)
Sure. What?

CHRIS
You okay?

GORDIE
(coming out of it)
Yeah. Sure.

CHRIS
Come on down here.

He drags Gordie down the alley between the Blue Point Diner and the Castle Rock Drugstore.

GORDIE
What is it?

19 EXT. ALLEY - MIDDAY 19

Chris stops in front of the garbage cans behind the Blue Point Diner.

GORDIE
Phew! Chris! Come on, gimme a break! I'm gonna throw u...

Words break off in Gordie's mouth and his eyes grow wide when he sees Chris pull a huge pistol with dark wood grips out of his pack.

CHRIS
You wanna be the Lone Ranger or the Cisco Kid?

GORDIE
Walking, talking Jesus! Where'd you get that?!

CHRIS
Hawked it out of my dad's bureau.

Gordie takes it and turns it over in his hand.

CHRIS
(continuing)
It's a forty-five.

GORDIE
(lying)
Yeah, I can see that. You got shells for it?

19 CONTINUED: 19

CHRIS
Nine of them -- all that was left in the box. My dad'll think he used 'em himself, shooting at cans while he was drunk.

GORDIE
Is it loaded?

CHRIS
No! Chrissake, what do you think I am?

GORDIE
(hefts the gun in his hand)
Wow.

He looks around, then takes aim at one of the trash cans and pulls the trigger:

KA-BLAM!

A huge hole appears in the corrugated metal. Both boys are stunned.

GORDIE & CHRIS
(scream)
Jesus!!!

Chris laughs wildly in amusement or hysterical terror -- we can't tell which.

CHRIS
You did it, you did it! Gordie did it.
(shouts)
Gordon Lachance is shooting up Castle Rock!

Gordie grabs Chris by the shirt and begins to pull him back up the alley.

GORDIE
Shut up! Let's get out of here!

The back door to the Blue Point jerks open and a buxom old WAITRESS in a white uniform charges out.

WAITRESS
(yells at the boys' backs)
Who did that? Who's letting off cherry bombs back here?

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (2) 19

Chris and Gordie run like hell up the alley -- past the drugstore, past the Emporium Galorium. Gordie tosses the .45 to Chris. Chris is killing himself laughing, but catches it and somehow manages to stuff it back in his knapsack. They vault over a fence and find themselves back on the street. They slow down so they won't look suspicious.

CHRIS
Man, you shoulda seen your face. Oh man, that was so neat. That was really fine.

GORDIE
You knew it was loaded, didn't you? You wet. I'm gonna be in trouble. That Tupper babe saw me.

CHRIS
Shit, she thought it was firecrackers. Besides, old Thunderjugs can't see past the end of her nose, you know that.

GORDIE
Well, I don't care. That was a mean trick, Chris. Really.

CHRIS
Come on, Gordie. I didn't know it was loaded, honest to God.

GORDIE
You really didn't load it?

CHRIS
No way.

GORDIE
You swear it on your mother's name even if she goes to hell for you telling a lie?

CHRIS
I swear.

He crosses himself and spits, then starts to laugh again. Even Gordie has to chuckle.

CHRIS
(continuing)
God, you shoulda seen your face.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (2) 19

They turn and continue on down the street. ACE MERRILL, a good-looking mean seventeen, and EYEBALL CHAMBERS, sixteen (he has one brown eye and one blue eye), come out of a pool hall as they pass. Ace snatches the New York Yankees cap off Gordie's head.

EYEBALL
Hey, girls! Where you going?

GORDIE
Hey, come on. My brother gave me that.

ACE
Yeah. And now you're giving it to me.

CHRIS
You're a real asshole, you know that.

ACE
Oooh! your little brother's not very polite, Eyeball.

Ace grabs Chris and twists his arm behind his back.

EYEBALL
Now, Christopher, I know you didn't mean to insult my friend.

ACE
I'm sure he didn't and I'm gonna give him the opportunity of taking it back. What do you say, kid?

CHRIS
Let go!

ACE
You take it back? You take it back? You take it back?

GORDIE
Hey, come on! Let him go! You're hurting him!

CHRIS
Yeah, yeah. I take it back.

ACE
There. I feel a lot better.

Ace pushes Chris into Gordie, knocking them both to the ground.

EYEBALL
See you later, girls.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (3) 19

Ace tips the stolen hat. Chris begins to pick up his stuff. Gordie just stares at Ace and Eyeball as they walk off.

CHRIS
Come on, man. Forget them. We're supposed to be at the tracks in ten minutes.

Gordie shakes off his anger, picks up his knapsack, and he and Chris walk off. After a beat, Chris sidekicks Gordie in the ass. A few more steps and Gordie sidekicks Chris...

20 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - NOON 20

The steel ribbons are heliographing in the sun. The heat is savage and we can hear the BOYS STRUGGLING UP the cindery embankment.

VERN (O.S.)
What do we need a pistol for, anyway?

CHRIS (O.S.)
It's spooky sleeping out at night in the woods. Besides, we might see a bear... or a garbage can.

The boys laugh as they COME INTO VIEW.

VERN
(pulls a comb out of his pocket)
I brought a comb.

CHRIS
What do we need a comb for?

VERN
Well, if we get on TV, we wanna look good, don't we?

TEDDY
(clapping Vern on the back)
Hot shit!

GORDIE
That's a lot of thinking, Vern-O!

Their congratulations fade as they join Chris, who is staring silently down the tracks.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: 20

Somehow they catch his mood. With their shirts tied around their waists and sweating like pigs, they all stand there for a moment looking into their future. Finally, Teddy, after a glance at Castle Rock behind them:

TEDDY
How far do you think it's gonna be?

CHRIS
We'll walk across the trestle into Harlow. Harlow's big. We're gonna be walking at least twenty miles. That sound right to you, Gordie?

GORDIE
Yeah. It might even be thirty.

VERN
Gee, maybe we should just hitchhike.

TEDDY
No way. That sucks.

VERN
All we have to do is go up to Route 7 to the Shiloh church, then down the Back Harlow Road. We'll be there by sundown.

TEDDY
That's pussy.

VERN
Hey, it's a long ways.

TEDDY
Did your mother ever have any kids that lived?

VERN
What do you mean?

CHRIS
Even if it's thirty, we ought to be there by tomorrow afternoon, if no one goes pussy.

They all look at each other.

VERN
No pussies here.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: (2) 20

TEDDY
(to Vern)
Miaoww...

Teddy fakes a jab at Vern. Vern flinches.

TEDDY
(continuing)
Two for flinching.

He punches Vern twice in the arm.

CHRIS
(through their laughter)
Come on, you guys.

And with Chris slightly in the lead, they start off.

DISSOLVE TO:

21 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - DAY 21

The boys are walking two on either side of the rails throwing rocks and singing the theme from "Palladin."

BOYS
(singing)
Have gun will travel reads the card of a man. A knight without armor in a savage land. His fast gun for hire heeds the calling wind. A soldier of fortune is the man called Palladin.

Chris takes a swig from Vern's canteen and hands it back. Gordie drinks deeply from his own, Teddy continues to sing.

GORDIE
We're gonna have to fill up at the junkyard faucet. My dad says it's a safe well. It's a hundred and ninety feet deep.

VERN
Not if Chopper's there.

TEDDY
(singing)
Palladin, Palladin, where do you roam?

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: 21

GORDIE
(to Vern)
If Chopper's there, we'll send you in.

VERN
Very funny...

TEDDY
(singing)
Palladin, Palladin, far far from home.

VERN
Hey, I'm kinda hungry. Who's got the food?

TEDDY
Oh shit! Did anybody bring anything?

CHRIS
Not me. Gordie?

Gordie shakes his head disgustedly. All three look at Vern. Vern shakes his head "no."

TEDDY
Oh, this is great! What are we supposed to do? Eat our feet?

CHRIS
You didn't bring anything either?

TEDDY
Well, shit, this wasn't my idea. It was Vern's idea. Why didn't he bring something?

VERN
What am I supposed to do? Think of everything? I brought the comb.

GORDIE
Wait, wait... Let's see how much money we got.

He unties his shirt and spreads it out on the cinders. The boys dig deep in their pockets. Chris is the first to drop his money on the shirt.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (2) 21

GORDIE
(continuing)
A dollar two from Chris... I got sixty-eight cents.

Teddy drops his.

GORDIE
(continuing)
Sixty cents from Teddy.

Vern drops his.

GORDIE
(continuing)
Seven cents, Vern?

VERN
Hey, I haven't found my pennies yet.

After a look at Vern, Gordie counts it all together.

GORDIE
Two thirty-seven. Not bad. Dusset's is at the end of that little road that goes to the dump. We can get some stuff there.

TEDDY & VERN
Yeah... great, great.

CHRIS
(looking back, casual)
Train coming.

VERN
Geronimo!!

He leaps halfway down the embankment in one crazy, clownish stride. We can hear the TRAIN COMING. Gordie puts his hand on one of the rails to feel it. It's THRUMMING crazily.

He gathers up the money. He is stuffing it in his pockets when he sees that Teddy is standing in the center of the tracks watching the train, which we can now see is rushing toward them.

Teddy's glasses glitter in the sun. His long hair flops untidily over his brow in sweat-soaked stringers and he is grinning. The train is getting closer.

GORDIE
Come on, Teddy.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (3) 21

TEDDY
No, huh-uh, I'm gonna dodge it.

He looks at Gordie, his magnified eyes frantic with excitement.

TEDDY
(continuing)
A train dodge, dig it? What's trucks after a train dodge?

He turns back to face the train.

GORDIE
You're crazy, man! You want to get killed?!

TEDDY
Just like the beach at Normandie!!

The train is speeding down on Teddy. Out of the corner of his eye, Gordie sees Chris spring forward. Chris grabs Teddy and drags him fighting and protesting to pull Chris down with him and, hitting and clawing at each over, they roll all the way to the bottom. Teddy comes up swinging. Chris slaps away his punches with his open hands.

TEDDY
(continuing)
You son of a bitch! Don't throw your weight around on me! I'll kill you, you dipshit!

CHRIS
Hey, look, I'm just trying to save your life. You wanna kill yourself? That what you want?!

TEDDY
You don't tell me what to do.

Vern grabs Teddy and Gordie steps in front of Chris. The TRAIN ROARS BY above them. The THUNDER OF DIESEL EXHAUST and the great heavy CLACKING OF BOXCAR WHEELS DROWNS OUT THE BOYS' VOICES. The train is a short one, but by the time it passes, Chris and Teddy have calmed down.

TEDDY
(continuing)
I don't need a babysitter.

CHRIS
You do, too.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (4) 21

GORDIE
Hey, come on, you guys.

CHRIS
(holds out his hand palm up)
Peace... Skin it.

Teddy's glasses are askew and his hearing aid cord dangles against his chest.

TEDDY
I coulda dodged it.

CHRIS
You can dodge it on the way back. Skin it, man.

Teddy slaps Chris's hand real hard and Chris slaps Teddy's real hard.

CUT TO:

22 TIGHT SHOT OF A MAILBOX 22

A baseball bat swings into it and knocks it off its post.

23 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY 23

While Jerry Lee Lewis' "Great Balls Of Fire" BLASTS AWAY ON THE SOUNDTRACK, a black '52 Ford with gangster white-walls, spinner hubcaps, and high-rise chrome bumpers is barreling along with its right wheels off in the dirt. Ace leans out the right front window with a baseball bat.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
About this time Charlie and Billy were playing mailbox baseball with Ace and Eyeball.

Ace takes a vicious swing at a farmer's mailbox and lofts it into a potato field.

ACE
Home run!!

24 INT. '52 FORD - DAY 24

Ace and Eyeball are in the front seat. Billy and Charlie are in the back. They're all drinking beer.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: 24

ACE
(handing him the bat)
You're up, Billy Boy.

BILLY
Naw, you guys win.

ACE
It's only six to three. You can catch up.

CHARLIE
You know, Ace...

Billy stops Charlie with an elbow to the ribs.

ACE
What's the matter with you two? You've been acting weird all day. What is it?

BILLY
Nothing. It's nothing.

ACE
Come on, I want to finish this game.

25 EXT. '52 FORD - DAY 25

Reluctantly, Billy leans out and cocks his bat. A mailbox looms up. Billy swings. TWANG! The mailbox is left damaged and dangling off its post.

ACE (O.S.)
Foooul baaall...

CUT TO:

26 CLOSE ON A SIGN 26

CASTLE ROCK JUNKYARD
HOURS 3-7 P.M.
CLOSED MONDAYS
TRESPASSING STRICTLY FORBIDDEN

Standing outside the cyclone fence, the four boys survey the piles of wrecked cars.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: 26

GORDIE
Hey, Vern, looks like your mom's been out driving again.

VERN
Oh, that's so funny I forgot to laugh.

TEDDY
(leaping onto the fence)
Paratroops over the side.

Vern, Chris and Teddy follow.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
(as the boys scale the fence)
Trespassing strictly forbidden was enforced by Milo Pressman, the junkman, and his dog, Chopper, the most-feared and least-seen dog in Castle Rock. Legend had it that Milo had trained Chopper not just to sic but to sic specific parts of the human anatomy.

Vern and Teddy drop to the ground inside the junkyard and together they run the distance to the pump -- the kind from which you have to call the water with elbow grease -- which stands in a bulldozed area not far from a tar-paper shack and a stunted ash. Chris and Gordie drop into the junkyard.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
(continuing)
Thus, a kid who had illegally scaled the junkyard fence might hear the dread cry: Chopper! Sic! Balls! And that kid would be a soprano for the rest of his life ... But right now, neither the dread Chopper nor Milo was anywhere in sight.

Walking across the flattened ground, Gordie and Chris watch Teddy working the pump handle frantically. Suddenly, he is rewarded with a flood of clear water and he and Vern stick their heads under the trough, Teddy still pumping away a mile a minute.

GORDIE
Teddy's crazy.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: (2) 26

CHRIS
Oh yeah. He won't live to be twice the age he is now, I bet.

GORDIE
His dad burning his ears like that. That's what did it.

CHRIS
Yeah...

GORDIE
(new thought)
You remember that time you saved him in the tree?

FLASH CUT:

27 FLASHBACK 27

CRACK! Teddy topples from the top of a tall pine, crashing and smashing through the branches toward the ground thirty feet below. As he falls by Chris, Chris' hand stabs out and catches a fistful of his hair. Teddy screams but he is saved.

CUT BACK TO:

28 PRESENT 28

CHRIS
I dream about that sometimes. Except in the dream I always miss him. I just get a couple of hairs and Teddy screams and down he goes. Weird, huh?

GORDIE
Weird.

He and Chris look at each other.

GORDIE
(continuing)
Yeah, but you didn't miss him. Chris Chambers never misses, right?

CHRIS
Not even when the ladies leave the seat down.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED: 28

He winks at Gordie, forms an O with his thumb and forefinger, and spits a neat white bullet through it. They grin at each other.

CHRIS
(continuing)
Race you.

GORDIE
Naw, I don't feel like... Go.

And Gordie's off and running.

CHRIS
(takes off after him)
You're a dead man, Lachance.

Gordie is sprinting as hard as he can. Chris, running easily, is gaining.

CHRIS
(continuing; clearly in control of the race, stays just behind Gordie)
Looks like Lachance has got him this time. He's got Chambers beat. But wait a minute. What's this? Chambers is making his move. Lachance is fading and it's...
(he puts on a burst of speed and passes the well)
... Chambers at the tape. And the crowd goes wild.

Chris cheers, then bends over panting, his hands on his knees. From the same position Gordie looks across and they smile at each other.

DISSOLVE TO:

29 A RUSTED TIN CAN 29

A pebble arcs into it.

30 EXT. DUMP - DAY 30

The boys are sitting in the shade of the ash tree, languidly pitching pebbles into the can.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: 30

Their faces are clean and their hair and shirts are wet and, for the first time since we've met them, they're quiet -- just watching the life of the dump around them. "Rockin' Robin" PLAYS on Vern's portable RADIO.

TEDDY
(breaking their silence)
You guys been watching the Mickey Mouse Club lately?

BOYS
Yeah... yeah...

TEDDY
I think Annette's tits are getting bigger.

CHRIS
Nah.

GORDIE
I think he's right. I noticed lately that the "A" and the "E"...
(he illustrates)
... are starting to bend around the sides.

VERN
Yeah. Yeah, you're right.
(pause)
Annette's tits are great.

BOYS
Yeah... yeah...

There's a long pause.

VERN
This is really a good time.

CHRIS
The most.

Gordie takes a swig of water.

GORDIE
A blast.

He squirts a stream of water at the can.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: (2) 30

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Vern didn't just mean being off-limits inside the dump, or fudging our folks, or going on a hike up the railroad tracks into Harlow...

Chris takes a drink from the canteen and squirts at the can. Vern tries it from his own canteen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
(continuing)
... he meant those things, but it seems to me now that there was more, and that we all knew it. Everything was there and around us. We knew exactly who we were and exactly where we were going. It was grand.

Teddy drinks and, looking straight ahead, squirts the water out of the side of his mouth into Vern's ear.

VERN
Hey, come on. Cut it out, willya?
(wiping his ear)
What time is it, Gordie?

GORDIE
(pulls the wristwatch out of his pocket)
Quarter after one.

VERN
We better go get the food. Junkyard opens at three. Chopper'll be here.

TEDDY
You go. You can pick us up on the way back.

VERN
I'm not going alone. We should all go.

TEDDY
I'm staying right here.

GORDIE
Me too.

VERN
Well, I'm not going.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: (3) 30

CHRIS
We'll flip for it.

GORDIE
Okay. Odd man goes?

CHRIS
That's you, Gordie. Odd as a cod.

GORDIE
(he gives them each a coin)
Flip or eat lead.

They flip and uncover.

GORDIE
(continuing)
Two heads and two tails. Flip again.

Four coins spin up into the sun. Four hands snatch them from the air. Four flat smacks on four grimy wrists. Four coins are uncovered.

VERN
Four tails! Oh Jesus, that's a goocher.

CHRIS
Come on, Vern. That doesn't mean anything. Go again.

VERN
No, man. A goocher, that's really bad. You remember when Clint Bracken and those guys got wiped out on Weed Hill in Durham? Billy tole me they was flippin' for beers and they came up a goocher just before they got into the car. And bang! They all get totalled. I don't like this. Sincerely.

TEDDY
Nobody believes that crap about moons and goochers. It's baby stuff, Vern. Come on.

Teddy flips. Chris and Gordie follow.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: (4) 30

TEDDY
(continuing; the coin covered on his wrist)
You gonna flip or not?

Reluctantly, Vern flips. The boys uncover. Vern, Chris and Teddy still have tails. Gordie is showing Thomas Jefferson on a nickel. Teddy starts to laugh his crazy, cackling laugh and points at Gordie.

GORDIE
I heard that only fairies laugh like that.

TEDDY
Eeee-eeee-eee, Gordie. Go get the provisions, you morphadite.

GORDIE
Don't call me any of your mother's pet names.

TEDDY
Eeee-eeee-eeee, what a wet end you are, Lachance.

GORDIE
Ah, shut up.

TEDDY/VERN/CHRIS
(chant)
I don't shut up, I grow up. And when I look at you I throw up.

GORDIE
(backing away)
Then your mother goes around the corner and licks it up.

Teddy, Vern and Chris groan. Gordie gives them the finger, then turns and runs off toward the entrance to the junkyard.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
I never had any friends later on like the ones I had when I was twelve. Jesus, does anyone?

31 EXT. QUIDACOLLO'S FLORIDA MARKET - DAY 31

32 INT. FLORIDA MARKET - DAY 32

It's a small country store. The owner, GEORGE QUIDACOLLO, is slowly piling hamburger meat onto his scale and trying to keep an eye on Gordie, who is shopping for the rest of the boy's provisions.

QUIDACOLLO
Hey, ain't you Denny Lachance's brother?

He takes a swig from a bottle of S'OK cream soda.

GORDIE
Yes, sir.

QUIDACOLLO
Sad thing what happened to him. The Bible says "In the midst of life, we are in death." Did you know that? Yuh. I lost a brother in Korea.

Gordie lays his purchases on the counter.

QUIDACOLLO
(continuing)
You look just like Denny, people ever tell you that? Yuh. Spitting image.

GORDIE
(glumly)
Yes, sir, sometimes.

Quidacollo puts another spatula of meat on the scale, then has a thought and looks out the screen door like he's having a vision.

QUIDACOLLO
I remember the year he was All-Conference. Halfback, he played. Yuh. Could he run? Father God and Sonny Jesus!

CUT TO:

33 FLASHBACK: INT. KITCHEN - LACHANCE HOUSE - DAY 33

DENNY, 18, all-American, good looking, and Gordie, 11, are having dinner with their parents.

FATHER
Could be some scouts at the game tomorrow.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: 33

DENNY
I don't know, Pop.

GORDIE
(timid)
Dad, could you pass the potatoes?

FATHER
That's what I hear, son.

MOTHER
Are you gonna see Jane after the game? She's a lovely girl.

GORDIE
Dad, can I have the potatoes?

FATHER
Dorothy, don't talk to the boy about girls...

GORDIE
Could I have the potatoes, please?

As the father ignores Gordie and continues, Denny reaches across the table for the potatoes.

FATHER
He shouldn't be thinking about girls. This is the biggest game of his life. Now, Dennis, when you're out there tomorrow...

DENNY
(handing the potatoes to Gordie)
Pop, did you read the story Gordie wrote? Gordie wrote a story. It was real good.

FATHER
(after a look at Denny, slaps the table; angry at the mother)
You see? That's what I'm talking about. Football takes concentration. You start in with the girls and now his mind's all over the place...

DENNY
(turns to Gordie and slips in)
I really liked it.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: (2) 33

Gordie beams. Denny grabs him and squeezes him in a playful headlock.

QUIDACOLLO (V.O.)
You play football?

CUT BACK TO:

34 PRESENT 34

GORDIE
What?

QUIDACOLLO
Do you play football?

GORDIE
No.

QUIDACOLLO
What do you do?

GORDIE
I don't know...

Quidacollo tops the mound of hamburger meat on the scale with another scoop. He clearly has a thumb pressed on the scale.

QUIDACOLLO
(removing the meat)
There you go, kid. Buck and a half of hamburg.

GORDIE
Uh... Mr. Quidacollo, your thumb was on the scale.

QUIDACOLLO
No, it wasn't.

GORDIE
Yeah, it was. I saw it.

QUIDACOLLO
You calling me a liar?

They lock eyes for a beat. Gordie backs down.

GORDIE
Just give me my stuff and I'll go.

Quidacollo packs up the food while Gordie waits uncomfortably in silence.

35 EXT. JUNKYARD ENTRANCE - DAY 35

Gordie is at the top of the fence. He monkeys down the other side.

36 EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY 36

Gordie, now carrying the bag of groceries in one hand, rounds a mound of scrap metal and pauses in midstride. Chris, Vern and Teddy are not where he left them. He frowns and glances around the junkyard. A few steps later, he can see the backs of Teddy and Vern's shirts and a piece of Chris behind the tree. A CAR TRUNK SLAMS closed to the right of Gordie. He whips a look in that direction. MILO PRESSMAN, fat, forty, wearing a trucking cap, comes around the edge of his tar-paper shack.

VERN (O.S.)
Run, Gordie!! Run!!

Gordie's head swivels back to his friends, who have scrambled out of the grass and are sprinting toward the fence.

MILO
Hey! Hey, you kid! What you doing there??! Come over here!!

Gordie breaks into a run, his sneakers kicking up hard little clods of dirt. Vern, Teddy and Chris get to the top of the fence and drop to the other side.

MILO
(continuing)
You come back here! Come back here or I'll sic my dawg on you, goddamnit!

Gordie runs even faster, his arms pumping, the BOTTLES in the brown paper bag CLANGING together. Teddy's high-pitched LAUGH eee-eee-eeee floats over it all.

VERN
Go, Gordie! Go!

MILO
(yells)
Chopper! Sic 'im! Sic 'im, boy!

NARRATOR (V.O.)
That's what he said. But what I heard was: "Chopper, sic balls"!

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: 36

With a bloodcurdling scream, Gordie doubles his speed. We can hear CHOPPER GROWLING and tearing up the earth behind him.

On the run, Gordie throws the bag of groceries over the fence and leaps, landing halfway up its chain-link side. He claws his way to the top and, without looking, simply jumps.

On the other side he almost lands on Teddy, who is doubled over and laughing like crazy. At the same instance, Chopper hits the chain-link fence behind him and lets out a HOWL of mangled pain and disappointment.

Gordie turns around, holding one skinned knee, to get a look at the famous Chopper. What he sees is not some huge hellhound but a perfectly common, medium-sized black-and-white mongrel dog who is YAPPING and jumping fruitlessly at the fence.

GORDIE
That's Chopper?!! That's Chopper?!!

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Chopper was my first lesson in the vast difference between myth and reality.

TEDDY
(starts to strut up and down in front of the fence)
Kiss my ass, Chopper! Kiss my ass! Bite shit!

Teddy bumps his fanny against the chain-link fence and Chopper does his level best to take Teddy up on his invitation. He does nothing but rack out his nose, which is bleeding already. Chris and Vern are lying weakly on the embankment, laughing so hard that they can do little more than wheeze.

MILO
(waddling toward them)
Here, here! You boys stop a-teasing that dawg! You hear me? Stop it right now!

TEDDY
(turning around)
Come on, Choppie! Sic me!
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (2) 36

TEDDY (CONT'D)
(he cups his hands over his crotch and thrusts his hips forward)
Come on! Sic balls!

Chopper goes nuts. He runs around in a big circle, YELPING AND BARKING and foaming, while he gets up speed; then launches himself straight at the security fence. He is going about thirty miles an hour when he hits it. The whole FENCE makes a low MUSICAL SOUND like a zither note -- YIMMMMMMMM.

Chopper gives a strangled YELP, both eyes come up blank, and he does a totally amazing reverse snap-roll, landing on his back with a solid THUMP. He lays there for a moment, then struggles to his feet, his tongue hanging crookedly from the left side of his mouth. Milo goes berserk.

MILO
I know you!! You're Teddy Duchamp!! Sonny, I'll beat your ass, teasing my dawg like that!!

TEDDY
(raves back)
Like to see you try! Let's see you climb over this fence and get me, fat ass!

MILO
Don't you call me that! You little tin-weasel peckerwood loony's son!

Teddy stops jumping up and down. His face goes pale. Vern and Chris stop laughing.

TEDDY
(hoarsely)
What did you call me?

MILO
(smiles)
Your dad's a loony. Loony up in the nuthouse in Togus, that's what. He held your ears to the stove and burned them off.

TEDDY
My father stormed the beach at Normandie!!

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (3) 36

MILO
He's crazier than a shithouse rat. No wonder you're actin' the way you are, with a loony for a f...

TEDDY
You call my dad a loony again, I'll kill you, I'll kill you!!!

Chopper is walking in a large, dazed figure-eight behind Milo. Teddy and Milo are nose-to-nose with the wire fence between them.

MILO
Loony, loony. Loony!!

TEDDY
Your mother blows dead rats!!!

Teddy throws himself at the fence and starts up.

MILO
You come on and try it, you slimy little bastard.

Chris and Vern grab Teddy by the loose part of his jeans and pull him off the fence. They both stagger back and fall over, Teddy on top.

TEDDY
Lemme up! Lemme up! Nobody ranks out my old man. Lemme up, goddamnit! Lemme up!

CHRIS
That's just what he wants! He wants to get you over there and beat the piss out of you and then take you to the cops.

TEDDY
Huh?

MILO
Never mind your smart mouth, kid. Let 'im fight his own battles.

GORDIE
Sure. You only outweigh him by five hundred pounds.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (4) 36

MILO
(ominously)
I know you, too. Your name's Lachance.
(points to Vern and Chris)
And those guys are Chris Chambers and one of those stupid Tessio kids. All your fathers are going to get calls from me, except for the loony up to Togus. You'll go to the 'formatory, every one of you. Juvenile delinquents!

He stands there, his fists clenched, glaring at the boys, trying to intimidate them.

CHRIS
(dragging Teddy away)
Come on. Let's get away from this asshole before I puke.

TEDDY
(tears beginning to flow)
He ranked my old man.

CHRIS
Teddy, c'mon.

The boys start back into the woods towards the tracks.

MILO
Come back here! Come back here! You foulmouthed little whore master! I'm calling the cops!

GORDIE
You do that. You do that. We'll tell them how you sicced your dog on us.

MILO
(in their direction)
Come back here... I said come back here, goddamnit... Come back here.

He stands there, a big man in a baseball cap with his dog sitting drunkenly beside him. He looks like the biggest third grader in the world, locked inside the playground by mistake, yelling for someone to come and let him out.

37 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - DAY 37

With the dump in the b.g., the boys come up onto the tracks and start along in gloomy silence.

VERN
We showed him. Thought we were a bunch of pussies.

GORDIE & CHRIS
Yeah...

TEDDY
(still crying)
He ranked my old man.

Teddy swipes the back of his hand across his nose. The other three boys look at him out of the corner of their eyes.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
I wondered how Teddy could care so much for his dad who'd practically killed him and I couldn't give a shit about my own dad who hadn't laid a hand on me since I was three and that was for eating bleach under the sink.

CHRIS
What do you care what a fat old pile of shit like him said about your father? Huh? I mean, sincerely.

GORDIE
He still stormed the beach at Normandie, right?

TEDDY
Yeah, yeah. Forget it.

VERN
You think that pile of shit was at Normandie?

TEDDY
Forget it, man.

VERN
He don't know nothin' about your old man. He's just dogshit.

CHRIS
Yeah. And whatever's between you and your old man, he can't change that.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: 37

TEDDY
(screams)
Forget it, alright! Just forget it!!

He's so angry he shakes his glasses off his nose.

CHRIS
(soothing)
Okay, okay...

Teddy straightens his glasses and the boys walk on in silence. Vern tries to lighten the mood by starting the "Have Gun Will Travel" theme.

VERN
(softly)
Have gun will travel reads the card of a man... A knight without armor...

Nobody joins and he trails off.

TEDDY
(after another awk-ward silence)
Hey, I'm sorry if I'm spoiling everybody's good time.

GORDIE
I'm not sure it should be a good time.

CHRIS
You saying you want to go back, man?

GORDIE
No, huh-huh! But going to see a dead kid -- maybe it shouldn't be a party.

VERN
Yeah, if he's really bad, like all cut up and blood and shit all over him, I could have nightmares and stuff...

CHRIS
Come on...

VERN
You know like guts and eyeballs and ready to jump and grab...

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (2) 37

CHRIS
Alright, alright...

VERN
Well, I can't help it.

Silently, the four boys press on.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
It was only a quarter to three but it felt much later. It was too hot and too much had happened. We weren't even close to the Royal River yet. We were going to have to pick them up and lay them down if we were going to make some real miles before dark.

The boys looks small and frail in the distance and the sun is so bright off the rails that you see them as white lines when you close your eyes.

CUT TO:

38 CLOSE ON A BARE SHOULDER 38

A razor blade ENTERS FRAME and begins to scrape the letter "C" into the skin. Above the "C," the word "WILD" has already been etched and blood still seeps through the blue ink that has been applied to the raw flesh.

39 EXT. YARD - BACK OF ACE MERRILL'S HOUSE - DAY 39

Ace, with a fresh tattoo on his shoulder that reads "WILDCARDS," is the one wielding the razor blade against Charlie Hogan's shoulder.

The RADIO IS ON. The Hollywood Argyles are singing "Alley Oop." Billy and Eyeball are lolling around the junk-filled yard catching some rays. They all have their shirts off, they all have bloody tattoos that read "WILDCARDS" and they're all drunk out of their minds on beer.

BILLY
I've been seeing her for over a month and all she'll let me do is feel her tits.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (2) 39

ACE
She's a Catholic. They're all like that. You want to get laid, you gotta get yourself a Protestant... or a Jew's good.

The SONG ENDS.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
The search for the twelve-year-old Ray Brower has spread to Motton and Durham.

EYEBALL
(as a commercial comes on) You're
Why don't they give up? The kid's gone. They'll never find him.

CHARLIE
Not where they're looking.

BILLY
(scared, staggers to his feet)
Eyeball's right, Charlie. They ain't never gonna find him.

EYEBALL
I'll tell you how they're gonna find him. Ten years from now some
42 hunter'll go in the woods to take a piss and there'll be his bones.

CHARLIE
You think they
I'll bet you a thousand dollars they find him before that.

EYEBALL
I'll bet you two thousand dollars they don't.

CHARLIE
(loud and triumphant)
Well, asshole, me and...

BILLY
Hey, what's the big deal? Who cares whether they find him or not?

ACE
Will you guys shut the fuck up?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (2) 39

ACE (CONT'D)
If either of you assholes had two thousand dollars, I'd kill you both.

Ace downs another beer and lets out a huge belch.

CHARLIE
(through clenched teeth, to no one in particular)
They're gonna find him.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Hey, it's the bossman, Bob Cormier. From the racks and stacks, it's the best on wax...

40 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - DAY 40

Teddy and Vern are walking side by side on the cinders. Chris and Gordie are quite a ways behind them.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
... it's the Chordettes with "Lollipop." It's boss!!!

As the SONG COMES IN, Teddy starts to do a shuffle step like a back-up singer. Vern picks it up.

CHORDETTES (V.O.)
(on the radio)
Lollipop, lollipop, oh lolly, lolly, lolly;
Lollipop, lollipop, oh lolly, lolly, lolly;
Lollipop, lollipop, oh lolly, lolly, LOLLIPOP!

On the final "pop," both Vern and Teddy "pop" their cheeks with a finger and we GO TO:

41 CHRIS AND GORDIE 41

CHRIS
I got some Winstons. Hawked 'em off my old man's dresser. One apiece. For after supper.

GORDIE
(preoccupied)
Yeah, that's cool.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: 41

CHRIS
That's when a cigarette tastes best. After supper.

GORDIE
Right.

They walk on. We can hear the SONGS CONTINUE on Vern's RADIO up ahead.

GORDIE
(continuing)
You think I'm weird?

CHRIS
Definitely.

GORDIE
No, no. Seriously. Am I like... you know... weird?

CHRIS
Yeah, but so what? Everybody's weird.

Pause. Chris kicks at a rock.

CHRIS
(continuing)
You ready for school?

Gordie shrugs.

CHRIS
(continuing)
Junior high. And you know what, Gordie? By next June we'll all be split up.

GORDIE
What are you talking about? Why would that happen?

CHRIS
'Cause it's not gonna be like grammar school, that's why. You'll be in the college courses. Me and Teddy and Vern, we'll all be in the shop courses with the rest of the retards, making ashtrays and birdhouses. You'll meet a lot of new guys. Smart guys.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (2) 41

GORDIE
Meet a lot of pussies is what you mean.

CHRIS
(grabs Gordie's arm)
No, man. Don't say that. Don't even think that.

GORDIE
(pulling away)
I'm not going in with a lot of pussies. Forget it.

CHRIS
If you don't, then you're an asshole.

GORDIE
What's asshole about wanting to be with your friends?

CHRIS
It's asshole if your friends can drag you down. You hang with us, you'll just be another wiseguy with shit for brains.

CUT BACK TO:

42 TEDDY AND VERN 42

VERN
You think Mighty Mouse could beat up Superman?

TEDDY
What are you cracked?

VERN
Why not? I saw yesterday he was carrying five elephants in one hand.

TEDDY
Boy, you don't know anything. Mighty Mouse is a cartoon. Superman is a real guy. No way a cartoon could beat up a real guy.

VERN
(thinks)
Yeah... maybe you're right. Would be a good fight, though.

CUT BACK TO:

43 CHRIS AND GORDIE 43

CHRIS
You could be a real writer someday, Gordie.

GORDIE
Fuck writing. I'm not going to be a writer. I don't want to be a writer. It's stupid. It's a stupid waste of time.

CHRIS
That's your father talking.

GORDIE
Bullshit.

CHRIS
Bulltrue. I know what your father thinks about you. He doesn't give a shit about you. Denny was the one he cared about. And don't try to tell me different.

Gordie is stunned. He looks angrily at Chris, then turns away and lengthens his stride.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
I couldn't tell him different. It's scary to find that someone else, even your best friend, knows exactly how things are with you.

The sun, lower now, comes at them through the overlacing trees in broken, dusty shafts, turning everything to gold.

CHRIS —
You're just a kid, Gordie.

GORDIE
Gee, thanks, Dad.

CHRIS
I wish to hell I was your father! You wouldn't go around talking about takin' those stupid shop courses if I was! It's like God gave you something, all those stories you can make up, and He said: This is what we got for you, kid.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: 43

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Try not to lose it. But kids lose everything unless somebody looks out for them and if your folks are too fucked up to do it, then maybe I ought to.

A strained silence settles on the boys and they can't look at each other. The tracks stretch ahead to Vern and Teddy, who are waiting for them.

44 EXT. TRACKS 44

VERN
(as Chris and Gordie approach)
Come on, you guys. Let's get movin'.

TEDDY
Yeah, by the time we get there, the kid won't even be dead anymore.

Chris and Gordie jog up. The boys throw their arms over each other's shoulder and, four abreast, start off down the tracks.

DISSOLVE TO:

45 EXT. RAILROAD TRESTLE - DAY 45

The rails run across a ridiculously narrow platform of four-by-sixes supported by long, frail-looking wooden posts and crisscrossing beams. It's fifty feet above the water and 150 yards long. There is no more than eighteen inches between the track and the edge of the trestle. And there is no railing. The thought of crossing it on foot is terrifying. And that's just what is going through the boys' minds as they look at it from the solid ground at one end.

VERN
Say, any of you guys know when the next train's due?

They all shrug.

GORDIE
We could go down to the Route 136 Bridge...

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: 45

TEDDY
What?! Are you crazy? That's five miles down the river. You walk five miles down the river, then you gotta walk five miles back. That could take till dark. We go across here, we can get to the same place in ten minutes.

VERN
But if a train comes, there's nowhere to go.

TEDDY
Hell, there isn't.

He swings over the edge and holds onto one of the 4X6's.

TEDDY
(continuing)
See how easy it is?

CHRIS
You telling me you're gonna hang like that out over the water if it's a two-hundred-car freight?

TEDDY
You chicken?

CHRIS
No, just askin' what you'd do.

TEDDY
Look, you guys go around if you want to. I'm crossing here. And while you guys are dragging your candyasses halfway across the state and back, I'll be waiting for you on the other side, relaxing with my thoughts.

CHRIS
You use your left hand or your right hand for that?

TEDDY
You wish.

GORDIE
One train already went by.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (2) 45

GORDIE (CONT'D)
And there probably isn't any more than one, two trains a day that go through Harlow.

TEDDY
There. See?

An edgy silence falls over the boys as they think about it. Then, Chris looks at Gordie with a crooked smile.

CHRIS
What do you think, Gordo?

GORDIE
Danger is my middle name.

TEDDY
Too cool!!

CHRIS
You wet-end Lachance. Come on.

They file out onto the trestle single file: Teddy first, then Chris, then Vern. Gordie lets them go, then kneels down and takes one of the steel rails firmly in his hand. It's silent. He steps onto the trestle. He watches his feet as he goes and between the ties he can see the embankment drop away beneath him and the rushing RIVER come INTO VIEW.

Teddy, who's further out, starts humming "circus" music as he "tightrope" walks on one of the rails, eighteen inches from a fifty-foot drop.

CHRIS
(continuing)
Goddamnit, man, get back in the middle.

With a pleased cackle, Teddy steps down off the rail -- only to begin walking backwards down the middle of the tracks.

TEDDY
I could do this in my sleep.

Suddenly, Teddy's right foot slips. Stunned shock registers on the others boys' faces as they watch him teeter on one foot, then fall into the abyss between two ties. Chris lunges forward. Desperately, Teddy twists himself in mid-air and at the last instant manages to get both arms over the tie in front of him. His feet kick wildly, looking for some support.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (3) 45

There's nothing below him but a fifty-foot drop to the rocks of the river. As Teddy struggles, Chris quickly steps around behind him, stretches out on the ties, reaches down, grabs the back of Teddy's pants, and pulls him up.

TEDDY
(continuing; rising to his feet, with Chris)
I wasn't gonna fall.

CHRIS
Just stop screwing around, okay?!!

They look at each other. Teddy looks away first. Then Chris steps aside and lets Teddy go ahead. He watches him for a moment. Subdued, Teddy is walking more carefully now. Chris follows him. With a small moan in his throat, Vern bends over, puts his hand on the ties, and half-walks, half-crawls forward. Cautiously, Gordie brings up the rear.

And with the crossties passing under them, the boys, each in his own way, work their way across the trestle. Gordie and Vern drop back because they're slower.

From time to time they look up to see Chris and Teddy surging further and further ahead. Sweat runs in rivulets off the boys' bodies and their breathing comes strained and harsh. Chris and Teddy pass the midway point...

Vern's hands come INTO VIEW. Beneath the ties we can see the river rushing fifty feet below them. As the rest of the him comes INTO VIEW, we see that his crabbing motion down the tracks is working the comb out of his shirt pocket. He throws his right hand up to stop it; this only succeeds in knocking it completely out of his pocket. It hits one of the ties. Vern stretches for it, but it trickles off his fingers and falls, falls, falls into the river below.

Up ahead, Chris stops and turns around to check on Gordie and Vern. They seem to be fine and he continues on his way.

Vern and Gordie pass the midway point. There's no turning back now. Slowly, we become aware of the NOISES around them -- the hot HUM OF A LOCUST, the sigh of the WIND, the RACKET OF A BLUEJAY, the TUMBLE OF THE WATER below, get bright and clear.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (4) 45

Gordie lifts a hand to wipe the sweat off his face. That motion throws him off-balance. He teeters toward the edge, then stumbles three ties forward before he can catch himself. Breathing hard, he stops. Sucking deep breaths of air, he composes himself. He tries a step, then another and another, then stops again. His head comes up. His eyes widen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
I've written books about people who can read minds and precognit the future. But the closest I ever came to that feeling myself was that day on the trestle.

As the Narrator talks, we realize that a NEW NOISE has entered our consciousness. it's a DISTANT, LOW RUMBLE. Gordie's head swivels, as if testing the wind, then he forces himself to bend and make a fist around the rail on his left. It vibrates and THRUMS in his hand. His mouth opens but no sound comes out.

In SUPER SLOW MOTION, Gordie tries to rise. It seems to take him forever, straining and straining upward. Finally, he breaks into a BARE FRAME.

GORDIE
(screams)
Train!!!

The other boys' heads snap around, checking Gordie to see if it's a joke. That question is answered immediately by the engine of a freight that hurtles INTO VIEW around a corner on the Castle Rock side of the trestle.

VERN
Aww, shit!!

Chris and Teddy take off. Behind Vern, Gordie breaks into a clumsy, shambling run. Vern increases the speed of his monkey walk. But it's not fast enough. He looks over his shoulder. The train is getting closer to the trestle.

VERN
(continuing)
Awwww, shit!!!

He straightens up and begins his own shuffling run.

GORDIE
Go, Vern! Go!

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (5) 45

Vern is holding his own when his left foot almost slips into the yaw beneath him. He flails his arms, stumbles again, and falls full length on the tracks.

GORDIE
(screams)
Vern!!!

Vern curls himself into a ball and begins to shake in terror.

GORDIE
(continuing)
Come on, Vern!! Let's go!!

Vern just looks at him. Gordie checks on the train; it's getting bigger.

GORDIE
(continuing)
Goddamnit, let's go!!!

He pulls Vern up and pushes him forward.

GORDIE
(continuing)
Goddamnit, let's go!!!

VERN
I can't!!! I'll fall!!!

Gordie pushes him forward. Instinctively, Vern swings out a foot, it finds a tie, his other follows, it finds a tie, again and again until he's running.

GORDIE
(thumping Vern on the back)
Run, you pussy. Run!

VERN
Awwwww, shit!!!

Gordie looks ahead to check on how far he has to go and sees Chris and Teddy step off the ties onto the embankment.

GORDIE
Go faster, Vern!! Faaaster!!

VERN
I can't!!!

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (6) 45

Hanging onto their bedrolls, Vern and Gordie run. Their muscles clench and loosen, clench and loosen. The SOUND OF THE TRAIN GETS LOUDER.

VERN
Awwwww, shit!!!

GORDIE
Run faster, you asshole.

Vern almost misses a crosstie, lunges forward, his arms out. Gordie whacks him on the back to keep him going.

GORDIE
Faster!! Faster!!

VERN
I can't!!!

But he does. The SOUND OF THE TRAIN IS VERY LOUD now. The boys look back. It's coming onto the trestle.

VERN
(continuing)
Oh Gawd, Gordie, oh Gawd, Gordie, oh Gawd, Awwwww, sheeeeeeeyit!!!

The freight's ELECTRIC HORN spanks the air into a hundred pieces with ONE, LONG, LOUD BLAST -- WHHHHHHHONNNNNNK!

GORDIE
Go, Vern!!! Go!!!

The trestle begins to shake under their feet -- WHHHHHHHHHONNNNNNK! WHHHHHHHHHONNNNNNK! Gordie looks over his shoulder. He and Vern are about to die.

With a superhuman effort, Gordie grabs Vern and throws both of them off the tracks toward the embankment. METAL SQUALLING AGAINST METAL, the freight strobes by. Vern and Gordie land in the dust and cinders and bury their faces in the hot earth. The train passes, its SOUND FADES. Gordie rolls over and looks at the sky. He and Vern are still shaking. After a moment, Chris' face appears in their view.

CHRIS
Hey, either you guys in the mood for a Coke?

VERN
(in a state of shock)
Huh... okay.

CUT TO:

46 CLOSE ON A HAND 46

putting a hamburger ball on the end of a forked stick. As the stick is extended over a CRACKLING FIRE, we WIDEN TO:

47 EXT. CAMPSITE - TWILIGHT 47

To see that all four boys are holding hamburger balls on the end of forked sticks out over the fire. Vern's is hanging precariously over the fire.

TEDDY
Man, that was the all-time train dodge. Too cool! Vern, you was so scared you looked like that guy Abbott Costello when he saw the mummy.

VERN
I wasn't that scared.

CHRIS & TEDDY
Vern... Vern...

VERN
No, really, I wasn't. Sincerely.

GORDIE
Then you won't mind if we examine the seat of your Jockeys for hershey squirts, willya?

VERN
Go screw.

Teddy pulls his hamburger in, slips it on a bun, and pulls out the stick.

CHRIS
Better turn yours over, Vern.

VERN
This is the way I like to do it.

PLOP! Vern's hamburger ball falls into the fire. The other guys start to laugh.

VERN
(continuing; poking in the fire for it)
Oh, man, oh no, man. You got any more, Gordie?

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: 47

GORDIE
Sorry, Vern-O.

Teddy's cackle rises above the other laughter.

VERN
This is not funny... What am I supposed to eat?

TEDDY
Whyn't you cook your dick?

CHRIS
Be a small meal.

Vern manages to spear an ash-covered nugget of meat out of the fire.

VERN
Screw you guys. I got it.

48 SAME - LATER 48

The fire is now embers. Gordie, Chris, Vern, and Teddy are arranged around it on their bedrolls, smoking. Not inhaling, just puffing.

VERN
Nothin' like a smoke after a meal.

TEDDY
Yeah... I cherish these moments.

Chris, Gordie and Vern look at him.

TEDDY
(continuing)
What?! What did I say?

CHRIS
Hey, Gordie, tell us that new story.

GORDIE
(shy)
What story?

VERN
It ain't one of your horror stories, is it, Gordie?

Teddy fakes a jab at Vern. Vern flinches.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: 48

TEDDY
Two for flinching.

VERN
(while Teddy punches him)
I don't want to hear no horror stories. I'm not up for that, man.

CHRIS
No, it ain't horror. It's really funny.

GORDIE
I didn't even write it down yet.

TEDDY
Is it about Sergeant Steel and his battlin' Dogfaces?

CHRIS
No, it ain't a war story, you psycho. I said funny. It's about this pie-eatin' contest. Come on, Gordie. Hammer that mother to us.

GORDIE
Eh... well, it's not really finished.

CHRIS
Tell it, anyway.

GORDIE
Okay... Well, the main guy of the story is this fat kid nobody likes named Davie Hogan...

VERN
Like Charlie Hogan's brother, if he had one.

CHRIS
Good, Vern. Go on, Gordie.

GORDIE
This kid, he's our age, but he's fat. He's real fat. He weighs like one-eighty but it's not his fault, it's his glands....

VERN
My cousin's like that! Sincerely!
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (2) 48

VERN (CONT'D)
She weighs close to three hundred pounds! Supposed to be hyboid gland or somethin' like that. I dunno about her hyboid gland, but what a blimp, no shit, she looks like a Thanksgiving turkey, and this one time...

CHRIS
Will you shut up, Vern?

VERN
Yeah, right! Go on, Gordie. It's a swell story.

GORDIE
Well, all the kids, instead of callin' him Davie, they called him Lard Ass. Lard Ass Hogan. Even his brother and sister call him Lard Ass. At school they put a sticker on his back that said "wide load" and ranked him out and beat him up whenever they got the chance. Then one day he got this idea. The greatest revenge idea a kid ever had.

DURING THE FADE, we hear the VOICE OF MAYOR GRUNDY through a CRACKLY PA SYSTEM.

MAYOR (V.O.)
... Okay, Principal John Wiggins...

During the APPLAUSE and BOOS, we:

FADE IN:

49 EXT. OUTDOOR STAGE - DAY 49

While the MAYOR introduces the next contestant, PRINCIPAL WIGGINS, his hands tied behind his back and wearing a large bib over his shirt front, crosses the stage and sits on a stool behind a long trestle table stacked high with pies. Another contestant, CALVIN SPIER, a beer-bellied man, is already in place. A banner which reads "THE GREAT GRETNA PIE-EAT" hangs over the platform.

MAYOR
And now our celebrity guest from KLAM in Portland, the bossman, Bob Cormier!

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: 49

He gets a bigger HAND and some SQUEALS from the teenage contingent in the audience. BOB, his hands tied behind his back, steps up to the microphone.

BOB
Thank you, Mayor Grundy...
(DJ voice)
From the racks and the stacks, it's the best on wax. Another double golden oldie twin spin sound sandwich from KLAM in Portland... it's...

BOB & CROWD
Boss!!!

During the APPLAUSE, the Mayor bibs him and we meet DAVID HOGAN, coming onto the stairs from the back of the stage. He slips in next to the last contestant, BILL TRAVIS, who's six foot five. Davie is a very fat kid.

MAYOR
And now a new participant in the annual Great Gretna Pie-Eat, but one we expect great things from in the future... young master David Hogan.

In the audience, the DONNELLY TWINS, identical, male, semi-ugly, cry out in unison.

TWINS
Go-get-'em-Lard-Ass!!! Chow-down-wide-load!!!

Squeezing by Bill Travis on the stairs, Lard Ass (Davie) shoots them an angry look over a smile and fails to see Bill's foot slide out to trip him. Lard Ass hits it and sprawls forward onto the stage. The audience shrieks with laughter. Lard Ass looks at them, memorizing their faces and smiles. Bill Travis extends his hand to help Lard Ass up.

BILL
Oh, you okay, young man?

Lard Ass accepts his hand.

BILL
(continuing; whispers as he pulls him up)
I hear you got a big appetite, Lard Ass. Don't even think about winning this.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (2) 49

Bill settles Lard Ass on his feet and the AUDIENCE CHEERS.

VOICE
(from the crowd)
Hey, Lard Ass, how was your trip?

MAYOR
Don't pay any attention to those fools, Lard Ass... I mean, Davie...

Lard Ass' STOMACH RUMBLES. The Mayor gives it a quick glance. Lard Ass smiles knowingly at him. A rehearsed chorus of BENEVOLENT ORDER OF WOODCHUCKS (middle-aged men in woodchuck hats and bowling shirts) accompanies Lard Ass' every step as he crosses to the table.

CHORUS OF WOODCHUCKS
Boom-ba-ba-boom-ba-ba-boom...

MAYOR
(interrupting the laughter)
And now the man you've all been waiting for. Four-time defending champeen. Gretna's own Bill Travis.

The audience goes crazy.

MAYOR
(continuing)
I got a ten on you myself, Billy-Boy.

Bill winks back.

Suddenly, the sound stops. We are on the stage. The five men: Travis, Lard Ass, Cormier, Wiggins and Spier all have pies in front of them. Their eyes are on Mayor Grundy.

MAYOR
(continuing)
Are you ready?

THE 5 PIE EATERS
Yes.

MAYOR
Are you set?

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (3) 49

THE 5 PIE EATERS
Yes.

CHORUS OF KIDS
Scarf up those fucking pies, Lard Ass.

Flustered, the Mayor manages to blush, smile, and look furious all at the same time. Finally, he raises a pudgy hand and then drops it.

MAYOR
Go!!!

Five heads drop into five pie plates.

Partisans in the crowd begin to cheer on their favorites.

Lard Ass' jaws machine gun up the top crust. A huge SUCKING SOUND issues from between his lips.

Still eating, Bill Travis looks at him in amazement.

Lard Ass raises his blueberry-stained face out of the pie.

LARD ASS
Done.

There's startled APPLAUSE from the audience.

Lard Ass dives into his second pie.

Bill Travis redoubles his efforts to catch him.

Blueberries fly from Lard Ass' pie dish. There are blueberries in his hair, blueberries on his bib, blueberries standing out on his forehead.

LARD ASS
(continuing)
Done.

Bill Travis hasn't even consumed the crust on his second pie.

MAYOR
(after a glance at Bill)
Better slow down, boy. You got to pace yourself if you want to hold out.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (4) 49

Ignoring him, Lard Ass tears into his third pie with lunatic speed. In record time he's finished.

LARD ASS
Done.

Another pie is put in front of him. In the audience, a FAT LADY holding a Pekingese begins to cheer him on lustily.

FAT LADY
Go, Lard Ass! Go! Go, Lard Ass! Go!

The crowd picks it up.

CROWD
Lard Ass! Lard Ass! Lard Ass!

GORDIE (V.O.)
What they didn't know was that Lard Ass really wasn't interested in winning. What he wanted was revenge. And right before he was introduced he'd gotten ready for it.

DISSOLVE TO:

50 EXT. REAR OF PLATFORM - EARLIER 50

Lard Ass is standing there out of sight of the crowd. IN SLOW MOTION he takes a bottle of yellow liquid labeled Castor Oil out of a jacket pocket and glug, glug, glug, empties it down his throat.

In the background, we hear BOSSMAN BOB CORMIER BEING INTRODUCED. Lard Ass urps with the dry heaves a couple of times. He struggles his stomach under control, then tilts his head back and cracks a raw egg into his open mouth. In one convulsive motion he swallows it.

CUT BACK TO:

51 SCENE 51

LARD ASS
Done.

The empty pie pan is taken away and a fresh pie is put in front of Lard Ass. He drops his face into it.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: 51

GORDIE (V.O.)
Racing through his fourth pie, Lard Ass begin to deliberately imagine he wasn't eating pies at all; he was eating cowflops. He was eating great big gobs of greasy grimy gopher nuts.

LARD ASS
Done.

Without taking his head out of his pie, Bill Travis looks at Lard Ass. A fifth pie is put in front of him. Lard Ass' chin breaks the crust.

GORDIE (V.O.)
Slowly, a sound started to build in Lard Ass' stomach, a strange and scary sound, a sound like a log truck coming at you at about a hundred miles an hour.

The SOUND IS SO LOUD the crowd can hear it. As they quiet down to listen to it, ALL OTHER SOUNDS FADE. Lifting his face out of his unfinished pie, Lard Ass grins at Bill Travis and urps a warning through blue teeth.

GORDIE (V.O.)
(continuing)
Suddenly, Lard Ass opened his mouth and before he knew it...

A glob of vomit shoots out of Lard Ass' mouth and hits Bill Travis full in the face.

GORDIE (V.O.)
(continuing)
Bill Travis found himself with a face full of used blueberries.

As one, all the women in the audience jump up and scream at the top of their lungs.

GORDIE (V.O.)
(continuing)
The women in the audience started to scream. Bossman Bob Cormier took one look at Bill Travis and barfed on Principal Wiggins.

He does.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: (2) 51

GORDIE (V.O.)
(continuing)
Principal Wiggins took one look at what used to be a white shirt and barfed on Mayor Grundy's Hush Puppies.

With a sick expression, the Mayor turns to his wife to complain...

GORDIE (V.O.)
(continuing)
Mayor Grundy took one look at his Hush Puppies and barfed all over his wife's tits.

People in the crowd begin to wrinkle their noses in disgust.

GORDIE (V.O.)
(continuing)
Then the smell hit the crowd and Lard Ass' plan swung into full gear.

A beautiful Young Girl turns to her Boyfriend for comfort and throws up on his neck.

GORDIE (V.O.)
(continuing)
Girlfriends barfed on boyfriends.

Two little Kids sitting on either side of their mother throw up in her lap.

GORDIE (V.O.)
(continuing)
Kids barfed on their parents.

The Fat Lady who started the Lard Ass chant buries her Pekingese in vomit.

GORDIE (V.O.)
(continuing)
A fat lady barfed on her dog. The Donnelly Twins barfed on each other.

The Donnelly Twins spray vomit on each other, step back in shock, then lean forward and do it again.

GORDIE (V.O.)
(continuing)
The Women's Auxiliary barfed on the Woodchucks.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: (3) 51

In unison, twelve Women in taffeta dresses bend over and throw up on the antlered heads of the men in front of them.

GORDIE (V.O.)
(continuing)
It was a complete and total barforama.

In a WIDE SHOT, everybody is throwing up on everybody.

CUT BACK TO:

52 PRESENT 52

Chris, Teddy and Vern are laughing hysterically.

TEDDY
Too cool! Too cool!

VERN
Oh God, what a gross out! What a total gross out!

CHRIS
The best. Just the best.

Their laughter dwindles to chuckles and Vern and Teddy look at Gordie.

TEDDY
Then what happened?

GORDIE
I don't know.

TEDDY
What do you mean, you don't know?

GORDIE
I told you I didn't have an ending.

TEDDY
Bullshit. What happened to Lard Ass?

GORDIE
I don't know.

TEDDY
How can you not know?

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: 52

CHRIS
You have to use your imagination.

VERN
No we don't. He's the one who made up the story. He's supposed to use his imagination. What happened?

GORDIE
Eh... I don't know. Maybe Lard Ass went home and had a couple of cheeseburgers.

Vern and Teddy think about that.

TEDDY
Geez, that ending sucks.

GORDIE
Well, that's why I didn't want to tell the story.

TEDDY
You could have made it so Lard Ass shot his father and ran away and joined the Texas Rangers. How about that?

Gordie and Chris exchange a glance.

GORDIE
I don't know.

TEDDY
Well, something good like that.

GORDIE
I guess so. Sorry you didn't like this story better.

TEDDY
Nah, it was good. Right up to the end, it was good. All that barfing was really good.

VERN
Yeah, that was cool, really gross. But Teddy's right about the ending. It was a gyp.

GORDIE
(sighs)
Well...

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (2) 52

Chris rescues him by TURNING ON THE RADIO.

BASEBALL ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Count's three and two now...
Whitey Ford shakes off the sign...

TEDDY
Oh, great! The Sox are playing the Yankees...

VERN
Turn it up, Chris, turn it up...

Gordie watches quietly as the boys turn their attention to the game.

DISSOLVE TO:

53 LONG SHOT OF THE CAMPSITE 53

The ANNOUNCER'S VOICE BLENDS INTO THE FLEETWOODS SINGING "COME SOFTLY TO ME." The boys are just vague silhouettes against the glowing embers of their dying fire. We can hear the MURMUR of their conversation.

BOYS
Red Sox... Mantle... Maris... '58 Corvette... Elliot Ness... Peter Gunn's cool...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
(over it all)
We talked into the night, the kind of talk that seemed important until you discover girls... Not one of us mentioned Ray Brower, but we were all thinking about him.

54 EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT 54

The four boys are asleep around what used to be the campfire. A LONG and HOLLOW SCREAM OF AGONY rises out of the woods toward the sliver of moon. The four boys rise as one out of their sleep and out of their bedrolls and look at each other in wide-eyed terror.

VERN
Oh, God!!!

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: 54

TEDDY
(whispers)
It's that Brower kid. His ghost's out walkin' in the woods.

VERN
(screams)
Oh God! I promise I won't hawk no more dirty books. I promise I won't say no bad swears. I promise...

CHRIS
(rummaging in his pack)
Shut up, Vern.

ANOTHER SCREAM comes from the woods. CLOSER this time. It sounds kinda like a woman dying of extreme fear.

GORDIE
What is it, Chris?

CHRIS
(pulls the gun out of his pack)
I think it's a wildcat... Sounds like a woman, doesn't it?

TEDDY
(starts to get up)
It's his ghost.

VERN
Arrg! Don't say that!

CHRIS
Sit down, Teddy.

TEDDY
I'm gonna go look for it. I wanna see the ghost.

VERN
Don't say that!!

TEDDY
I just wanna see if...

The WILD SOBBING CRY RISES into the night again. Gordie and Chris freeze, their hands stuck to a frozen Teddy.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: (2) 54

TEDDY
(continuing; whispers)
Jesus H. Baldheaded Christ!!

The boys are afraid to breathe. The woods seem to close in on them.

VERN
Maybe we should stand guard.

GORDIE
I think it's a good idea.

TEDDY
Give me the gun. I'll take the first watch.

DISSOLVE TO:

55 EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT 55

Teddy is sitting cross-legged by the husk of the campfire with his "campaign" hat pulled low on his forehead and the .45 pointed skyward in his right hand. Chris, Gordie, and Vern are on their bedrolls trying to get to sleep.

TEDDY
2300 hours. Corporal Teddy Duchamp stands watch. No sign of the enemy. The fort is secure.

CHRIS
Just shut up and keep your eyes open.

Pause. Teddy, pretending his fist is a bugle, BLOWS TAPS.

BOYS
Shut up! Geez, Teddy, I'm trying to sleep...

TEDDY
(after a long pause; to himself)
The dogfaces rested easy in the knowledge Corporal Teddy Duchamp was protecting all that was dear to them.

DISSOLVE TO:

56 SAME - LATER 56

A nervous Vern is standing guard. He whirls and points the .45 at every FOREST SOUND. The other boys are restlessly asleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

57 SAME - LATER 57

Chris is sitting watch braced against a tree. His arms are folded over his knees with the .45 in his right hand. The other boys are still asleep. We MOVE IN ON Gordie's face.

DISSOLVE TO:

58 DREAM - EXT. CEMETERY - DAY 58

A coffin drops THROUGH FRAME to reveal Gordie (12) in a dark suit watching it being lowered into the ground. His face is expressionless and his eyes are dry. But behind him tears stream down his parents' faces and they can barely contain their sobs. The coffin starts to disappear into the hole. Gordie's father drops a hand on Gordie's shoulder. Gordie looks at him.

FATHER
(staring straight ahead)
It should have been you, Gordie.
It should have been you.

CUT BACK TO:

59 EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT 59

Gordie moans and thrashes in his bedroll. A hand reaches in and shakes him awake. Gordie opens his eyes and finds Chris staring down at him.

CHRIS
(whispers)
Are you okay?

GORDIE
Huh?

CHRIS
You were dreaming.

GORDIE
Oh...

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: 59

CHRIS
Go back to sleep.

Chris stands up and walks back to his "guardpost" by the fire. Gordie raises up on one elbow and watches him go. After a beat he gets up, crosses over, and sits down next to Chris, and after a long pause:

GORDIE
I never cried at Denny's funeral.

Chris understands completely. We can almost feel the friendship between the boys.

GORDIE
(continuing; looking up at the sliver of moon)
Maybe you could go into the college courses with me.

CHRIS
That'll be the day.

GORDIE
Why not? You're smart enough.

CHRIS
They won't let me.

GORDIE
What do you mean?

CHRIS
(after thinking about it)
It's the way people think of my family in this town. It's the way they think of me. I'm just one of those low-life Chambers' kids.

GORDIE
That's not true.

CHRIS
It is. Nobody even asked me if I took the milk money that time. I just got a three-day vacation.

GORDIE
Did you take it?

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (2) 59

CHRIS
Yeah. Yeah, I took it. You knew I took it.
(points to Vern and Teddy)
Teddy knew. Everybody knew. Even Vern knew, I think.

Gordie opens his mouth and closes it.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He was right. No matter what I might have said to my parents, I had known.

CHRIS
But maybe I was sorry and tried to give it back.

GORDIE
You tried to give it back?!

CHRIS
Maybe. Just maybe. And maybe I took it to old lady Simons and told her, and maybe the money was all there, but I got a three-day vacation anyway, because the money never showed up. And maybe the next week old lady Simons had this brand-new skirt on when she came to school.

GORDIE
Yeah, it was sorta brown with dots all over it.

CHRIS
So just say that I stole the milk money, but then old lady Simons stole it from me. Just suppose I told that story. Me, Chris Chambers. Kid brother of Eyeball Chambers. You think anybody would have believed it?

GORDIE
No way. Jesus Christ!

CHRIS
And do you think that bitch would have dared try something like that if it had been one of those dootchbags from up on The View that had taken the money?

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (3) 59

GORDIE
No.

CHRIS
But with me... well, maybe she had her eye on that skirt for a long time. Anyway, she saw her chance and she took it. I was the stupid one for even trying to give that money back. But I never thought ... I never thought that a teacher ... oh, who gives a fuck anyway? I just wish I could go someplace where nobody knows me.

Chris swipes an arm angrily across his eyes and we realize he is crying. Gordie pats him consolingly on the back.

CHRIS
(continuing)
I guess I'm just a pussy, huh?

GORDIE
No way, man.

DISSOLVE TO:

60 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - DAWN 60

The gun gleams dully on one of the tracks. Gordie is seated next to it reading his Vampire comic while behind him the morning is pushing the night out of the sky. He is in no hurry to awaken the other boys sleeping around the dead fire below him.

A SLIGHT NOISE to his right causes him to look in that direction and he finds himself staring into the dark, dusty, black eyes of a young deer. She looks serenely at him, her head slightly lowered in curiosity. What she sees is a mesmerized kid with his hair in a sleep-scarecrow of whirls and many-tined cowlicks, wearing jeans with cuffs and a brown khaki shirt with the elbows mended and the collar turned up.

They look at each other for a long time, then with an insouciant flip of her white bobtail, she turns and walks off to the other side of the tracks. Gordie's eyes follow her. She finds some grass and begins to crop. Not daring to breathe, Gordie continues to watch her. Then the rail starts to THRUM under the gun and he's suddenly afraid for her.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: 60

The doe's head comes up, cocked back toward Castle Rock. Her nose works the air, coaxing it a little. Then she is gone in three gangling leaps, vanishing into the woods without a sound.

61 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - DAWN 61

As the FREIGHT CLATTERS by, we LOOK under it from the other side of the track at Chris, Vern and Teddy waking up and shaking out the night willies.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The freight woke up the other guys and it was on the tip of my tongue to tell them about the deer, but I ended up not doing it. That was one thing I kept to myself. I've never spoken or written of it until just now, today. But for me it was the best part of the trip, the cleanest part.

62 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - MORNING 62

The boys are walking along eating a breakfast of blackberries out of the basket each has created out of his shirt.

VERN
Geez, Gordie, you shoulda bought some breakfast stuff like Twinkies and Snoballs and root beer.

GORDIE
Sorry, Vern, I guess a more experienced shopper coulda gotten a lot more for your seven cents.

CHRIS
Just pretend these blackberries are sausages and eggs and pancakes and whatever else you want.

Teddy and Vern try it. They try it real hard... then:

TEDDY
What if I pretend you're stupid?

63 SAME - LATER 63

The sun is beating down relentlessly.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: 63

Under it the four boys, grimy and sweaty, are chugging along with grim determination.

DISSOLVE TO:

64 SAME - LATER 64

The four boys are making good time by walking on top of the rails. The only way they can do this and keep their balance is to pair up and each boy holds one end of a stick that is extended over the railroad bed between them. Gordie and Vern are in front. Chris and Teddy behind.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
With our stomachs rumbling we pressed on toward the Royal. Our obsession with Ray Brower was growing and kept us walking faster than we had any business doing in that heat. The idea of seeing that kid's dead body was starting to become very real to us. We had to see it. I think by then we had come to believe we deserved to see it.

DISSOLVE TO:

65 EXT. SLIGHT PROMONTORY - DAY 65

We're LOOKING OVER a meadow, the forest beyond, and beyond that we can see a good-size river flowing silver in the afternoon sun. Thunderheads are beginning to build on the horizon. The boys step INTO VIEW. Chris stops and indicates the river.

CHRIS
Gentlemen... the Royal.

Gordie looks at the tracks which head off to the left and make a long, languid loop before they come back to run parallel to the river.

GORDIE
God, the tracks go way out of the way.

The boys think about this a second, then:

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: 65

CHRIS
All we have to do is cut across that field and we'll be there in an hour.

VERN
I think we should stick to the tracks.

TEDDY
No way. Let's go.

CHRIS
Gordie?

GORDIE
(staring straight ahead)
Yeah.

TEDDY
(leaping over the side)
Take no prisoners!!

He forms his hand into a bugle and plays the "Cavalry Charge" as he runs down the embankment into the meadow. Gordie and Chris follow him.

VERN
(still on the tracks)
It's a lot safer if we... You don't know what's in those woods.
(he looks around; softer)
We could get lost...
(shouts)
Hey, you guys! Wait up for me!

66 EXT. MEADOW - DAY 66

Spread out on a carpet of grass, the boys run toward the woods.

67 INT. SHED - BACK OF ACE MERRILL'S HOUSE - DAY 67

The long room is crammed with junk. Sunlight streaks through the slatted sides to fall on Ace and Charlie who are drinking beer and working on an engine block. "Get A Job" by the SILHOUETTES IS COMING FROM AN OLD RADIO on a shelf.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: 67

CHARLIE
Hey, Ace, I got something important I want to tell you, but you gotta swear on your mother's good name that you'll never tell anybody.

ACE
(cool)
You got it, pal.

68 EXT. BOOM ROAD BRIDGE - DAY 68

Billy is fishing next to Eyeball.

BILLY
Eyeball, you know that Brower kid, I could tell something about him but you gotta swear on your mother's good name that you won't tell anybody.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Billy and Charlie had managed to keep their enormous secret for just about thirty-six hours. A personal record for both of them.

69 EXT. YARD - BACK OF ACE MERRILL'S HOUSE - DAY 69

Billy Tessio, Charlie Hogan, JACK MUDGETT, NORMAN "MOKE" BRACOWICZ, VINCE DESJARDINS, Eyeball Chambers, and Ace Merrill are gathered around Ace's '52 Ford and Vince's pink '54 Studebaker.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
By noon Ace and Eyeball had told their secrets to everybody in the gang. I guess for those guys protecting their mother's good name wasn't a top priority.

ACE
(from the fender of his car)
Look, all we gotta do is take a lot of fishing gear up there with us and when the cops ask us what we were doing there, we just say "Hey, Officer, we was just planning to take a few pickerel out of the Royal and... heh, heh, heh, "Look what we found..."

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: 69

VINCE
We're gonna be famous! We're gonna be on every radio and TV show in the country!

CHARLIE
Ace, maybe me and Billy shouldn't go.

ACE
(casual authority)
I think it would be a good idea if you did.

CHARLIE
Yeah, you're probably right on this one.

70 EXT. WOODS - BIRCH SWAMP - DAY 70

Chris, Teddy, Vern, and Gordie are sloshing along in ankle-deep mud. Teddy fakes a jab at Vern. Vern flinches.

TEDDY
(punches Vern in the arm)
Two for flinching.

VERN
I hate this shortcut.

Although the other boys are beginning to agree with him, nobody says so and they slog on.

71 EXT. WOODS - BIRCH SWAMP - DAY 71

The boys step out of the undergrowth to find themselves at the edge of a thirty-foot-wide, slow-moving body of water that is the center of this swamp. Lily ponds and green scum float on its surface.

VERN
Oh great. How are we supposed to get across this?

TEDDY
We'll use you as a raft.

As they talk, Chris walks out into the water and tests the depth with a stick.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: 71

CHRIS
It's not that deep. We can walk across.

Gordie, Teddy, and Vern join Chris. Two steps later -- PLOP!!

They step into a hole that drops them into the water up to their necks. They scramble to get their packs and bedrolls above their heads.

VERN
(with his backpack dripping on him)
I told you we shoulda stuck to the tracks.

TEDDY
Did you invent the word pussy?

VERN
I suppose this is fun for you.

TEDDY
No, but this is...

He jumps on Vern's shoulders and pushes him under.

VERN
(comes up sputtering and blowing)
Goddamnit, Teddy, get away from me.

Teddy dunks him again.

VERN
(continuing)
Quit it, willya! That's not funny! I mean it!

Teddy does it again.

VERN
(continuing)
Stop it, Teddy!

GORDIE
Come on, Teddy. Leave him alone. Act your age.

TEDDY
This is my age. I'm in the prime of my youth and I'll only be young once.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: (2) 71

CHRIS
Yeah, but you're gonna be stupid for the rest of your life.

VERN
Ohhhh... Rank out! Rank out!

TEDDY
That's it, Chambers. You just signed your own death warrant.

He starts for Chris. Chris, who's worked his way closer to the other bank, tosses his pack up on dry land and turns to face Teddy's attack.

TEDDY
(continuing)
Nobody ranks out Teddy Duchamp and lives to tell about it.

He leaps at Chris, who pivots and with one arm deflects Teddy and pushes him under the water. Vern hits Chris from behind, pushes him down, and takes off for the bank. Chris grabs his legs and pulls him back. Teddy jumps on Chris.

TEDDY
(continuing)
You die, Chambers.

Vern throws a handful of moss at Chris, which hits Teddy in the face. Chris throws Teddy off his shoulders and splashes Vern. Teddy jumps back on Chris. The three of them horse around until they realize that Gordie is not among them. He has reached the shallow water and is edging toward dry land.

CHRIS
Where do you think you're going, Lachance?

He leads Teddy and Vern toward Gordie.

GORDIE
(starting to run in knee-deep water)
Hey come on, you guys.

Chris gains on him and with a diving tackle sends both of them sliding across a mud flat.

TEDDY
Pile on! Pile on!

Teddy and Vern throw themselves on Chris and Gordie and the four of them roll around in the mud.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: (3) 71

GORDIE
Get off me, man. I don't want to do this.

VERN
Sleeper hold. Sleeper hold.

GORDIE
Cut it out! I'm serious!

VERN
No one gets out of the sleeper hold.

GORDIE
Hey, Vern, there's something on your neck!!

VERN
I'm not falling for that one, Lachance.

CHRIS
No, man! There's really something!!

TEDDY
It's a leech!!...

He raises himself out of the water. There are leeches on his arms and chest.

TEDDY
(continuing; screams)
Leeches!!!

The four boys scramble out of the water, stripping off all their clothes.

VERN
OhGodOhGodOhGodOhGod!!!!

In a SERIES OF CUTS, they frantically rip at the leeches that have bitten into their bodies.

CHRIS
Gordie, there's some on your back...

GORDIE
Get them off!! Get them off!!

Chris brushes them off.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: (4) 71

CHRIS
Are there any on mine?!

There are more -- three or four running down his back like buttons. Gordie pulls them off and brushes more off his own legs. The leeches have all been removed and the boys are beginning to relax when Gordie checks inside his shorts. From his expression we know that there is a leech on his genitals.

GORDIE
(whimpering)
Chris, Chris! Oh shit, man! Oh shit!!

Gordie reaches down and when his hand comes back INTO VIEW it is holding the granddaddy of all leeches. Its body has swelled to four times its normal size and it is so full of blood it is purplish red. It bursts between his fingers and Gordie's own blood splatters across his palm and down his shirt. Vern runs up and begins to twirl in front of him like an insane dancer on a carnival stage.

VERN
They off, Gordie? They off me? They off me? They off? Huh? Huh? They off me, Gordie?

Gordie's eyes roll up in his head and he faints.

DISSOLVE THROUGH BLACK TO:

72 GORDIE'S POV 72

of Chris, Vern, and Teddy's faces floating over him. Their words come in gentle OSCILLATIONS.

BOYS
... not dead... loss of blood... the sun...

Everything WHITES OUT. CHRIS' VOICE brings us back.

CHRIS
Can you hear me, Gordie? Are you there, man?

GORDIE (O.S.)
Yeah...

His VIEW JIGGLES as he tries to rise.

73 EXT. WOODS - BIRCH SWAMP - DAY 73

The boys help Gordie into a sitting position, then rock back and watch concerned as he blinks and shakes his head to clear the cobwebs.

VERN
I can't believe you fainted, man.

TEDDY
He made a bad mistake and looked at your face.

CHRIS
Shut up, Teddy.
(he leans in close)
You okay, Gordie?

GORDIE
Yeah. Sure.

DISSOLVE TO:

74 SAME - LATER 74

Gordie is leaning up against a tree -- staring off in space. He is fully dressed. Chris and Teddy are finishing wringing the muddy water out of a blanket. They have their pants on, as does Vern, who is flapping his shirt in the air to dry it.

CHRIS
(softly)
Maybe we should take Gordie back.

TEDDY
(soft)
Great, Chambers. Now you're turning pussy, too.

CHRIS
(flipping Teddy his end of the blanket)
What's your problem, Duchamp? He had a leech hanging from his balls. He fainted.

TEDDY
(his voice rising)
What are you? His mother?

CHRIS
Fuck you.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: 74

TEDDY
Fuck you.

VERN
I think Chris' right. Let's go back.

TEDDY
Oh, what a surprise! The king of the pussies wants to go back, too.

VERN
Stop calling me that!!

TEDDY
What?... Pussy?

Gordie looks at his friends with a distant stare.

TEDDY
Pussy?!

VERN
Stop it!

TEDDY
Pussy!!

VERN
Stop it!!

TEDDY
Pussy!!!

VERN
Stop it!!!

TEDDY
Pussy!!! Pussy!!!
Pussy!!!

VERN
Stop it!!! Stop it!!!
Stop it!!!

VERN
(leaps at Teddy and swings)
You fucking four-eyed psycho!!!!

His fist catches Teddy on the neck and knocks him down. Vern jumps on him and starts punching him.

VERN
(continuing)
You flinched, Teddy! Two for flinching!! Two for flinching!!

TEDDY
(punching back)
Get off me!! I'll kill you, you fucking retard!!

VERN
You flinched, Teddy!! You flinched!!

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: (2) 74

CHRIS
(trying to pull them apart)
Hey, come on!! Break it up!! Break it up, you guys!!

GORDIE
(getting up)
Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!!!

Chris, Teddy, and Vern turn and look at Gordie.

GORDIE
(simply)
I'm not going back.

He calmly picks up this things and heads off through the woods, alone. There's a beat, then without looking at each other, the other boys gather their things and follow.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
At the time I didn't know why I needed to see that body so badly. Even if no one had followed me, I would have gone on alone.

75 EXT. ROUTE 7 - DAY 75

Ace's Ford and Vince's pink Studebaker are bombing alone the highway. Ace pulls into the oncoming lane.

76 INT. ACE'S FORD - DAY 76

Ace is behind the wheel. Charlie and Billy are on the seat beside him. The back seat is covered with fishing equipment.

VINCE
(shouts across the space between the cars)
No way, Ace. No way.

From the seat next to Vince, Moke and Eyeball are yelling obscenities and flipping the bird to their buddies in the Ford. Jack Mudgett is doing the same thing from the back seat.

77 EXT. ROUTE 7 - DAY 77

The Ford goes ahead, the Studebaker goes ahead, the Ford catches up.

An oncoming car appears around a turn. Its HORN SOUNDS. Ace pushes his car ahead, but Vince won't give him a break. The oncoming CAR SOUNDS ITS HORN AGAIN.

78 INT. STUDEBAKER - DAY 78

VINCE
I got 'im.

His buddies laugh and slap the dashboard.

79 EXT. ROUTE 7 - DAY 79

Ace's Ford speeds toward the oncoming car.

80 INT. FORD - DAY 80

Billy and Charlie are shitting bricks.

CHARLIE
Jesus Christ, Ace! Fall back!!
Come on, Ace!! Fall back!!

BILLY
Sweet Mother of Mary!!! We're gonna die, Ace!!!

But Ace ignores them. He takes a sip of beer and his grin gets bigger as he stares down the oncoming car. It's getting awfully close. Billy and Charlie cringe back in their seats.

81 INT. STUDEBAKER - DAY 81

Vince and his buddies are sure they are about to see a car wreck and have gone stone silent.

82 INT. FORD - DAY 82

The oncoming car fills the windshield. It's HORN IS CONTINUOUS NOW. Ace doesn't even flinch. Suddenly, the oncoming car veers off.

83 EXT. ROUTE 7 - DAY 83

As Ace's Ford skims by it, the oncoming car flies off the road, jumps over a ditch, and plows into a cornfield. Ace's Ford pulls in ahead of the Studebaker.

84 INT. FORD - DAY 84

ACE
I won.

85 EXT. SKY - AFTERNOON 85

A jagged fork of lightning licks down from the underside of one of the clouds.

86 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - AFTERNOON 86

A long, shaking BLAST OF THUNDER rolls over Gordie, Chris, Vern, and Teddy as they come out of the woods and start up the embankment that supports the tracks. Heading down the track, Gordie is still in the lead.

VERN
When do you think it's gonna start coming down?

No one responds.

CHRIS
(to Gordie)
Coming through the woods, I bet we saved over an hour.

GORDIE
(not really listening; points ahead)
Is that the Back Harlow Road, Teddy?

TEDDY
Yeah.

The sun sails behind another cloud bank and this time it doesn't come out. The river turns from gold to purple and the day becomes gloomy.

CHRIS
The Brower kid should be around here someplace.

87 EXT. SKY - AFTERNOON 87

Another bolt of lightning shoots out of the clouds.

88 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - AFTERNOON 88

The light flashes on the boys, now walking in pairs again, each two scanning a side of the railroad embankment.

VERN
Jeezis!! Oh my Jeezis, lookit that!!

The others look in the direction he is pointing to see a blue-white FIREBALL bowling its way up the left-hand rail of the GS&WM tracks.

IT HISSES past them and they turn to watch it go, dumbfounded. Twenty feet further on it makes a sudden POP and disappears.

TEDDY
(subdued)
What a pisser! This is gonna be a pisser like you wouldn't believe!

Another lightning bolt flashes in the sky. The following CLAP OF THUNDER comes immediately. Our ears are still ringing from it when Vern begins to screech triumphantly.

VERN
There! There he is! Right there! I see him!

Gordie, Chris, and Teddy run up beside him and look. At the bottom of a washout is a marshy, mucky tangle of undergrowth, and sticking out of a wild cockspring of blackberry brambles is a single pale white hand. Lightning flickers and strokes. THUNDER RIPS in behind each stroke. The breeze becomes a wind.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
None of us could breathe.
Somewhere, attached to that hand,
was the rest of Ray Brower.

CHRIS
Sheeeee...

It ends with a sigh.

Vern licks his lips in a compulsive sort of way, as if tasting something so weird that it excites and revolts him at the same time.

Teddy just stands and looks. The WIND WHIPS his hair, first away from his ears and then back over them.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED: 88

Gordie looks at Chris and Chris blinks back at him. Chris jumps over the side of the washout. Gordie follows. Vern and Teddy come close behind. But Chris and Gordie are the first to reach the body of Ray Brower. He is lying face down with his arms over his head like a diver about to execute.

His hair is a dark reddish color. There is blood in it, but not a great deal. He has on a dark green T-shirt and blue jeans. His feet are bare.

But a few feet behind him, caught in tall blackberry brambles, is one filthy low-topped Ked. Its mate is ten feet away. Chris looks at them in amazement.

CHRIS
God...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The train had knocked Ray Brower out of his Keds just like it had knocked the life out of his body. The kid wasn't sick, the kid wasn't sleeping. The kid was dead.

Chris squats down next to the body. Teddy joins him and together they turn Ray Brower face up into the lightning, the STEADY CRACK OF THUNDER.

His eyes are open, but terrifyingly out of sync -- one is rolled back so far that we can see only a tiny arc of iris; the other stares straight up into the storm.

There is a dried froth of blood above his mouth and on his chin and the right side of his face is lacerated and darkly bruised. Still, he doesn't look bad. Teddy and Vern move in closer behind Chris and Gordie. The boys' eyes widen as a beetle comes out of Ray Brower's mouth, treks across his fuzzless cheek, steps onto a nettle, and is gone. We BEGIN TO MOVE IN on Gordie's face.

TEDDY (O.S.)
D'joo see that? I bet he's fulla bugs. I bet his brains're...

CHRIS (O.S.)
Shut up, Teddy.

CUT TO:

89 FLASHBACK: INT. KITCHEN - LACHANCE HOUSE - DAY 89

DENNY
(handing the potatoes to Gordie)
Pop, did you read the story Gordie wrote? Gordie wrote a story. It was real good.

FATHER
(after a look at Denny, slaps the table; angry at the Mother)
You see? That's what I'm talking about. Football takes concentration. You start in with the girls and now his mind's all over the place...

DENNY
(turns to Gordie and slips in)
I really liked it.

Gordie beams. Denny grabs him and squeezes him in a playful headlock.

CUT BACK TO:

90 PRESENT 90

Gordie's lower lip quivers and tears begin his cheeks.

CHRIS
(backing away from the body)
We'll build him a stretcher, poles and shirts... just like the Scouts do, okay?

Their eyes still on the body, Vern and Teddy move with him.

TEDDY
Okay.

Gordie bursts into sobs.

CHRIS
Gordie?!...

GORDIE
I miss him, Chris. I miss him. Why'd he have to die?

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: 90

TEDDY
What's with Gordie?

VERN
I seen something like this on Twilight Zone once.

CHRIS
Shut the fuck up.

TEDDY
(softly to Vern)
Sincerely.

Chris crosses to Gordie, sits down next to him, and pats his arm.

GORDIE
(through his sobs)
He wants me to be Denny. I can't be Denny, I can't be Denny.

CHRIS
You don't have to be.

GORDIE
He hates me. He hates me. Why does he hate me?

CHRIS
He doesn't hate you.

GORDIE
He hates me.

CHRIS
No, he's just fucked up.

GORDIE
If I was Denny...

CHRIS
You're better than Denny.

GORDIE
... he would love me.

CHRIS
You're better than Denny.

GORDIE
I'm no good, Chris. He said it... I'm no good...

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: (2) 90

The dam bursts. Gordie's sobs rack his body like punches. Chris puts his arm around him and holds him.

CHRIS
He doesn't know you, man. He doesn't know you.

Slowly, Gordie starts to calm down.

CHRIS
(continuing)
You're gonna be a great writer someday, Gordie.

A long pause; Gordie's sobs diminish to snifflings. It begins to rain.

CHRIS
(continuing)
Maybe you'll even write about us guys if you ever get hard up for material.

Gordie's crying has stopped; a slight chuckle as he wipes his eyes.

GORDIE
Have to be pretty hard up.

ACE (O.S.)
Well, what the fuck do you know about this?

The boys all jump like they've been goosed and Vern cries out. Chris and Gordie get to their feet. Ace and Eyeball are standing on the far side of the boggy patch, where the woods take up again. They are both wearing red nylon high school jackets. Their d.a. haircuts have been plastered back against their skulls.

EYEBALL
Sumbitch! My little brother!!

ACE
You wasn't planning on takin' that body away from us, were you?

CHRIS
(trembling voice, as he steps forward)
You get away, man. We found him. We got dibs.

ACE
Oh... I guess we better start running, Eyeball. They got dibs.

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: (3) 90

CHRIS
We earned him. You guys came in a car. That's not fair. He's ours.

EYEBALL
(mocking)
That's not fair. He's ours. Well, not anymore.

TEDDY
That's four of us, Eyeball. You just make your move.

ACE
Oh, we will, don't worry.

The trees shake behind him and Eyeball, and Charlie, Billy, Jack, Moke, and Vince step out.

CHARLIE
Vern!!! You little sonofawhore! You was under the porch. Cocknocker!

VERN
No, I swear... It wasn't me.

BILLY
You little keyhole-peeping bung wipe! I'm gonna beat the living shit out of you!

Billy starts forward. Vern turns and runs back over the tracks. He doesn't see Ace stop Billy -- by simply touching him on the shoulder.

ACE
Now listen, you guys. You got two choices. Either you go quietly and we take the body, or you stay and we beat the crap out of you, and we take out the body.

CHARLIE
Besides, me and Billy found him first.

TEDDY
You was chicken! Vern told us about you.
(sniveling parody of Charlie)
I wish we never boosted that car!
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: (4) 90

TEDDY (CONT'D)
I wish we never went out on no Back Harlow Road to whack off a piece! Oh, Billee, I think I just turned my Fruit of the Looms into a fudge factory! Oh, Billee...!

CHARLIE
That's it! Kid, whatever your name is, get ready to reach down your fuckin' throat the next time you need to pick your nose.

He starts toward Teddy. Ace stops him.

ACE
Hold it!! Okay, Chambers, you little faggot. This is your last chance. What do you say, kid?

CHRIS
Why don't you go home and fuck your mother some more.

ACE
(his smile freezes)
You're dead.

Ace takes out a switchblade and hits the chrome. Six inches of steel flick out.

ACE
(continuing)
Let's take 'em.

CLACK! CLACK! CLACK! One, two, then three more switchblades open in rapid succession. The last one belongs to Charlie. The full force of the storm arrives and the rain comes down in sheets.

CHARLIE
The four-eyes is mine.

The older boys start to advance. Teddy drops into a fighting crouch, his eyes measure the distance between himself and the older boys. They continue to advance. Teddy swallows. There's no fence here like there was with Milo.

TEDDY
(starting to crack)
Come on, Chris. Let's split!

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: (5) 90

CHRIS
(steely)
They're not taking him.
Sincerely.

The older boys are getting closer. Teddy's eyes flick between Ace and Charlie.

TEDDY
They got knives, man.

CHRIS
They're not taking him.

Ace's gang keeps advancing through the mud and the rain.

TEDDY
(starting to move backward)
This is crazy, man. Come on.

And he turns and runs back over the tracks. Ace smiles and the gang continues to advance on Chris, who stands his ground, alone.

CHRIS
You're gonna have to kill me, Ace.

ACE
No problem.

Just as Ace cocks his wrist for a thrust:

KA-BLAM! The older boys freeze in their tracks. Ace, who's been staring at Chris, jerks around and looks at Gordie, who's holding the pistol pointed at the sky. Gordie steps in to stand shoulder to shoulder with Chris.

GORDIE
You're not taking him. Nobody's taking him. It's not right.

Ace sizes up Gordie.

ACE
Now listen. You better put that down before you take your foot off with it. You ain't got the sack to shoot a chipmunk.

He starts to edge forward.

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: (6) 90

GORDIE
Ace, if you don't stand still I'm going to shoot you. I swear to God.

ACE
Come on, Lachance. What do you say you just gimme that gun and get out of here while you still can. You must have at least some of your brother's sense.

GORDIE
(slowly points the gun at Ace's head)
Suck my fat one, you cheap dime-store hood.

ACE
(looking around at his gang)
What are you gonna do? Shoot us all?

GORDIE
(soft)
No, Ace. Just you.

And Ace stops. There's a long pause as the two of them look at each other. It goes back and forth. Finally, Ace nods and takes a half step back. He looks at Gordie and Chris.

ACE
We'll get you for this.

CHRIS
Maybe you will. Maybe you won't.

ACE
Oh, we will.

The rain subsides.

GORDIE
Fine. You guys get into your cars and bomb on back to Castle Rock.

ACE
(backing up)
We're not gonna forget this, if that's what you're thinking. This is big time, baby.

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: (7) 90

CHRIS
Good. You just go and do your getting another day.

The big kids disappear into the screen of trees between the bog and the road. Chris and Gordie stand perfectly still, listening. Finally, they hear TWO CARS START UP AND DRIVE OFF. Chris looks at Gordie and smiles.

CHRIS
(continuing)
Suck my fat one... whoever told you you had a fat one, Lachance?

GORDIE
Biggest one in four counties.

Chris and Gordie turn to look at the body as Vern and Teddy drift back INTO THE SCENE. There's an awkward silence.

VERN
Are we gonna take him out?

GORDIE
No.

TEDDY
But we came all this way. We could be heroes.

GORDIE
Not this way, Teddy.
(gets his bedroll)
Chris, give me a hand.

91 SAME - LATER 91

In a LONG SHOT we see that the sky has ripped open to allow the sunlight to shaft through and that the small figures of Chris and Gordie are laying a blanket over the body while Vern and Teddy look on.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Ray Brower's body was found. But neither our gang nor their gang got the credit.

DISSOLVE TO:

92 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - NIGHT 92

Silhouetted against the moonlit lake, the boys trot along the edge of a meadow.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED: 92

NARRATOR (V.O.)
In the end, we decided that an anonymous phone call was the right thing to do.

DISSOLVE TO:

93 EXT. CASTLE ROCK - DAWN 93

The sun is seeping over the horizon.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
We got back to Castle Rock a little past five o'clock on Sunday morning, the day before Labor Day. We had walked all night.

94 EXT. CASTLE ROCK - DAWN 94

Except for the boys, the streets are empty and awesomely quiet. They stop at a corner and after a beat:

VERN
Well, guys see you in school.

CHRIS & GORDIE
Yeah... see ya...

TEDDY
See you in junior high.

VERN
Yeah...

They wave to Vern over their shoulders as he walks away from them. In waving back, he stumbles ever so slightly on the curb. Embarrassed, he pretends it didn't happen and, without looking at them again, continues on his way. An awkward silence settles on Chris, Gordie, and Teddy.

TEDDY
(uncomfortable)
I better get home before my mom puts me on the ten most-wanted list.

He takes a few steps away, then turns back.

TEDDY
(continuing)
Hey, man. No hard feelings, okay?

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED: 94

CHRIS
No way.

TEDDY
See ya.

And he continues down the street. After several steps we hear:

TEDDY
(continuing; singing)
Have gun will travel reads the card of a man...
A knight without armor in a savage land...
His fast gun for hire heeds the calling wind...
A soldier of fortune is the man called Palladin.

Chris and Gordie watch Teddy go, then turn and walk off in the opposite direction.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
As time went on we saw less and less of Teddy and Vern, until eventually they became just two more faces in the halls. It happens sometimes. Friends can come in and out of your life like busboys in a restaurant.

95 EXT. STREET - CASTLE ROCK - DAWN 95

Chris and Gordie walk by the pool hall.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
I heard that Vern got married out of high school, had four kids, and now is the forklift operator at the Arsenault Lumber Yard.

96 EXT. STREET - CASTLE ROCK - DAWN 96

They walk by the Blue Point Diner.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Teddy tried several times to get into the Army, but his eyes and his ears kept him out. Last I heard he'd spent some time in jail and was now doing odd jobs around Castle Rock.

97 EXT. STREET - DAWN 97

Gordie and Chris stop in front of the vacant lot and look up at their treehouse.

CHRIS
I'm never gonna get out of this town, am I, Gordie?

GORDIE
(earnest)
You can do anything you want, man.

CHRIS
(changing the subject)
Gimme some skin.

GORDIE
(softly)
Hey, Chris...

CHRIS
(trying to avoid the moment)
Skin.

Gordie slaps his palm.

GORDIE
I'll see you.

CHRIS
Not if I see you first.

Chris walks off. Gordie watches him go.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Chris did get out. He enrolled in the college courses with me, and although it was difficult for him, he stuck with it and graduated 19th in our class. He went on to college and eventually became a lawyer. Last week he entered a Chicken Delight to get a three-piece snack bucket. Just ahead of him two men got into an argument. One of them pulled a knife. Chris, who had always made the best peace, tried to break it up. He was stabbed in the throat. He died almost instantly.

Chris turns to Gordie. With a smile, Gordie waves.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: 97

Chris waves back. In the middle of it, he fades and disappears. Gordie lowers his arm and heads for home. OVER A CLOSEUP of his face as he walks TOWARD US, the Narrator's WORDS APPEAR IN THE GREEN PRINT OF A WORD PROCESSOR.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Although I hadn't seen him in more than ten years, I know I'll miss him forever.

BOY (O.S.)
Come on, Dad, practice starts at four.

98 INT. HOUSE - GORDON LACHANCE'S OFFICE - DAY 98

GORDON (37) looks up from the word processor at his twelve-year-old SON and his twelve-year-old FRIEND standing in the doorway. Both boys have towels over their shoulders and swimming goggles hanging around their necks.

GORDON
You ready?

SON
Yeah! We've been ready for an hour.

GORDON
I'll be right there.

The boys leave.

FRIEND (O.S.)
He said that a half hour ago.

SON (O.S.)
My dad's weird. He gets like that when he's writing one of his books.

Gordon stares at the screen for a moment, then gets up and goes to the coat rack next to the closet. He plucks off a jacket and, wandering over to the window, puts it on.

Outside, his Son, his Friend, and two other twelve-year-old boys are having a towel fight on the lawn next to the station wagon.

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED: 98

FRIEND
(to his buddy)
You're a dead man, Lachance.

SON
Shut up.

FRIEND
I don't shut up, I grow up and when I look at you I throw up.

Watching them, Gordon runs his fingers through his hair, smiles, then goes back to the word processor and, still standing, types:

NARRATOR (V.O.)
I never had any friends later on like the ones I had when I was twelve. Jesus, does anyone?

He looks at what he's written for a second. He's satisfied. He takes out the disc and turns off the machine. As he leaves the room, the SCREEN GOES BLACK.

FADE OUT.

THE END